

**FAMILY LIFE
AND
SOCIAL
OBLIGATIONS
IN ISLAM**

Dr. Mazhar U. Kazi

CONTENTS

Foreword	7-8	CHAPTER 2	
CHAPTER 1		CHILDREN	33-50
PARENTS	9-32	COMMANDMENTS IN	
COMMANDMENTS IN		THE QUR'AN	33
THE QUR'AN		SAME IN AHADITH	
Benevolence to	10	Adhan in ears	36
Ehsan with non-Muslim	11	Tahneek	37
Spending on	12	Aqiqah	38
Being thankful to	13	Tasmiyah	39
Praying for	14	First spoken word	40
Position of mother	14	Good Manners	41
Prayer of other Prophets	15	Greetings to	42
COMMANDMENTS IN		Admonition for Salat	43
AHADITH		Teaching of the Qur'an	43
Importance of	16	Love and kindness	44
Parents of other people	17	Equal treatment	45
Care in old age	18	Regarding girls	46
Position of mother	19	Divorced or widowed	
Mother's sister	21	daughter	48
Non-Muslim mother	21	Divorced or widowed	
Position of father	22	mother	48
Rights after death	23	Spending on	49
Blessings for obedience	25	Marriage	50
Admonition for disobedience	27		
Punishment for disobedience	28	CHAPTER 3	
Three unique incidents	28	MARRIAGE	51-70

FAMILY LIFE AND SOCIAL OBLIGATIONS IN ISLAM

COMMANDMENTS IN THE QUR'AN 52 Polygamy 54 SAME IN AHADITH Recommendation for 56 Desirable things 57 Sight before marriage 57 Consent in marriage 58 Freedom of will for women 59 Witnesses for 59 Proclamation for 60 Festivity in 60 Marriage sermon 61 Dowry 62 Walimah 63 DIVORCE COMMANDMENTS IN THE QUR'AN 64 SAME IN AHADITH 68	Equal rights of women 74 Kindness and forgiveness to wife 75 Sanctity of wife's honour 76 Equal rights for arbitration 77 Kindness to divorced wife 77 COMMANDMENTS IN AHADITH Best treasure of man 77 Kind treatment 78 Prohibition for dislike 79 Women's rights 80 Ideal husband 80 Equal treatment with wives 81 Reward for spending 81 Admonition for not spending 81 Conduct of Rasulullah S.A.W. 82
---	--

DUTIES OF WIFE TOWARDS HUSBAND

Ideal wife	83
Respect for husband	83
Need of husband's permission for fasting	84
Response to husband's call	84
Reward for care of property	85
Admonition for giving trouble	86
Reward for pleasing	86

CHAPTER 4

HUSBAND AND WIFE 71-89

DUTIES OF HUSBAND TOWARDS WIFE

COMMANDMENTS IN THE QUR'AN

Paying of dowry	73
Taking care of basic needs	74

CONTENTS

	CHAPTER 5	COMMANDMENTS IN THE QUR'AN	104
RELATIVES	91-102	SAME IN AHADITH	
COMMANDMENTS IN THE QUR'AN		Islamic brotherhood	106
Importance	91	Admonition against division	106
Rights	92	Mutual obligations	107
Spending on	94	Reward for loving	109
Admonition to the rich	94	Warning for having malice	110
Kindness to	95	Having goodwill	110
Cardinal principle	95	Giving of council	110
Criterion of righteousness	95	Safeguarding the honour	111
Will of inheritance	96	Helping the needy	111
COMMANDMENTS IN AHADITH		Visiting the sick	113
Prophet's S.A.W. first sermon in Madinah	97	Covering up faults	114
Criterion for upholding family ties	97	Making peace	114
Importance of the same	98	Making intercession for a Believer	115
Blessings for the same	99	Honouring an aged Believer	115
Spending on	100	Punishment for killing	116
Punishment for breaking family ties	101		
Rights of elder brother	101	CHAPTER 7	
Regard for young and old	102	SOCIAL OBLIGATION	117-136
CHAPTER 6		NEIGHBOUR	
MUTUAL OBLIGATIONS OF BELIEVERS	103-116	Type of neighbours	119
		Importance of rights	119
		First dispute on the Day of Judgement	120
		Criteria for love of Allah &	

FAMILY LIFE AND SOCIAL OBLIGATIONS IN ISLAM

His Prophet s.a.w.	120	Basic reason for creation	
Criterion of Eman	121	of Muslim Ummah	138
Criterion of good conduct	122	Essential attribute of	
Due rights	122	Rasulullah's mission	139
Giving of presents	123	Essential attribute of	
Warning for offending	124	Muslim State	139
Sharing of knowledge	125	Essential attribute of	

ORPHAN

COMMANDMENTS IN THE QUR'AN	126	Believers	139
----------------------------	-----	-----------	-----

SAME IN AHADITH	127	Luqman's advice	140
-----------------	-----	-----------------	-----

COMMANDMENTS IN AHADITH

POOR

COMMANDMENTS IN THE QURAN	129	Criterion of Eman	141
---------------------------	-----	-------------------	-----

SAME IN AHADITH	130	An essential social obligation	142
-----------------	-----	--------------------------------	-----

WIDOW

COMMANDMENTS IN AHADITH	131	A prerequisite for acceptance of supplications	142
-------------------------	-----	--	-----

One of the highest kind of Jihad	142
----------------------------------	-----

SLAVES & SERVANTS

COMMANDMENTS IN THE QUR'AN	133	Consequence of not doing it	143
----------------------------	-----	-----------------------------	-----

SAME IN AHADITH	134		
-----------------	-----	--	--

INDEX

THE QURANIC VERSES 147-148

CHAPTER 8

SPIRITUAL OBLIGATIONS —INVITING OTHERS TO ALLAH'S DEEN 137-145

COMMANDMENTS IN THE QUR'AN	
----------------------------	--

N.B. s.a.w. means
Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam

FOREWARD

All praise belongs to Allah, the only One, the Supreme, the Most Merciful and Most Forgiving. We depend entirely on His Mercy, and He is sufficient for all our affairs in this world and the Hereafter. Peace and blessings be upon His servant and the last Messenger Muhammad S.A.W. the Mercy for mankind, the illuminating light and intercessor on the Day of Judgement. Peace and blessings be on his noble family members, his companions, and all those who follow him until the Day of Resurrection.

Islam is a complete way of life that encompasses all aspects of one's personal and social life. As such, this divine code of life is valid for everyone irrespective of time and place. One of the most important aspects of this code of life is that it deals with our social obligations. In some ways, this is more important than our personal obligations to Allah. If a person fails in his personal obligations towards Allah and then turns back to Him with sincere repentance, Allah will hopefully forgive him. The Qur'an states: *Allah loves those who turn to Him (with sincere repentance)* (2:222). On the other hand, if a person fails in his obligations towards his fellow beings, he will meet Allah on the Day of Judgement with a claim against him by the wronged person. Allah, in such a case, will become the judge between the two persons and will not forgive him/her until the wronged person does so. Moreover, Allah is the Lord of the whole universe and is free from all wants and needs. His Glory and Might is not affected at all whether we obey or disobey Him. On the other hand, if a person wrongs a fellow being, he brings mischief to the whole society. The Qur'an states: *Allah loves not those who do mischief.* (5:67). Obviously, Allah will not forgive

FAMILY LIFE AND SOCIAL OBLIGATIONS IN ISLAM

such a person on the Day of Judgement. It is, therefore, essential that we have proper knowledge of our social obligations and try our best to fulfill them.

The consequences of ignoring Allah's guidance and disobeying His social laws are all too apparent in the Western society; large number of broken homes, abundance of illegitimate children, abuse of children and wives, neglected parents, dilapidated nursing homes, high divorce rate, single family mothers, and the ever increasing rate of rape, murder and street crimes etc. Let us save our youngsters and homes from these evils. It is with this intention that this compendium has been prepared.

The present compendium presents an objective description of the family and social obligations in Islam. I have compiled verses from the Qur'an and Ahadith pertaining to each of these obligations. The message is, thus, derived directly from the Qur'an and Ahadith. The English translations of the Qur'an by Abdullah Yousuf Ali, Marmaduke Pickthall and T.B. Irving have been utilized for quoting the verses from the Qur'an. The Ahadith quoted in the compendium do not present the literal translation of the Prophet's noble words. Their meaning has been rendered into simple and lucid English.

I pray that Allmighty Allah through His Mercy may accept this humble effort and make it a source of guidance for the readers. Ameen!

Dr. Mazhar U. Kazi
Houston, Texas.

Jamadi Al-Thani 1414
December 1993

CHAPTER 1

PARENTS—DUTIES AND OBLIGATIONS

COMMANDMENTS IN THE QUR'AN

The Qur'an gives us very detailed and explicit commandments regarding our duties and obligations towards parents. Though the Qur'an teaches us to be kind and compassionate to everyone, it uses a very special term to describe our relationship with our parents. It commands us to treat our parents with Ehsan. Imam Raghīb, who is regarded as an authority on the Arabic language, explains this term as follows: Ehsan is that state of a relationship in which a person is pleased even when he receives less than his due rights and offers more than what his duties call for. It is clear from this definition that the Qur'an does not merely ask us to treat our parents on the basis of equality and justice. It commands us rather, to be pleased with whatever parents could offer us. Simultaneously, it also commands us to try our best to please them by giving them our greatest love, respect and obedience. Following are a few Qur'anic verses pertaining to this issue.

And remember we took covenant from the children of Bani Israel (to the effect): Worship none but Allah and treat your parents with Ehsan. (Baqarah 2 : 83)

FAMILY LIFE AND SOCIAL OBLIGATIONS IN ISLAM

Serve Allah, and join not partners with Him and treat your parents with Ehsan. (Nisa 4 : 36)

Say : come, I rehearse what Allah has prohibited for you : Join not anything with Him and treat your parents with Ehsan. (An'am 6 : 151)

Your Lord has decreed that you worship none but Allah and that you treat your parents with Ehsan. (Bani Israel 17 : 23)

It should be noted that, in all of these verses the Qur'an first calls for our duties towards Allah and immediately after this calls for our duties to our parents. This in itself speaks for the relative importance of parent's position in our Deen. Following is another verse reminding us that next to the obligations to Allah, our obligation is to our parents.

*Show gratitude to Me and to your parents
(Luqman 31 : 14)*

In fact, it is the beauty and the blessing of our Deen that it gives such a dignified and respected position to parents in the Muslim community. We should also remember, and realize, that it is Allah the Almighty who has given this position to parents. It thus becomes our duty to obey the commandment of Allah and to treat our parents with Ehsan. If we fail to do so, we shall be guilty of disobeying Allah. Following are a few other related commandments of the Qur'an.

Benevolence to parents

Your Lord has decreed that you worship none but Allah ; and that you treat your parents with Ehsan ; if one or both of them attain old age in your life,

PARENTS—DUTIES AND OBLIGATIONS

say not to them (even a word of) 'uf', nor repel them, but speak to them in terms of honour; And out of kindness, lower unto them the wings of submission through mercy, and say: My Lord! have mercy on them both, as they did care for me when I was a child. (Bani Israel 17 : 23-24)

As in other verses, here also the Qur'an first gives us the general commandment of treating our parents with *Ehsan*. It then gives us a few specific commandments. First, it states that when our parents reach old age, we should be so kind and compassionate towards them that we should not even say "uf" to them. It should be noted that during their old age, parents are usually dependent on children for their financial and physical needs. Moreover, people during old age usually become more emotional and demanding. The Qur'an commands us that when our parents reach this stage of life, we should be so kind and understanding that we should not utter even a single word of contempt before them. Imam Hasan ibn Ali said that this is the last level of showing disrespect to parents. If there was something beyond this level, Allah would have mentioned that as well. Second, the Qur'an simultaneously commands us to speak to them with honour and dignity. Third, it commands us to treat them with utmost respect and humility and lastly we should remember them in our supplications.

Ehsan even with non-Muslim parents

We have enjoined on man Ehsan with their parents, but if they strive (to force) you to associate with Me (in obedience and worship) anything of what you have no knowledge, obey them not. (Remember!) You have to return to Me, and I will (then) tell you all that you did (in the world). (Ankabut 29 : 8)

FAMILY LIFE AND SOCIAL OBLIGATIONS IN ISLAM

But if they strive to make you join in worship with Me things of what you have no knowledge, obey them not; yet consort with them in the world kindly and follow the path of him who turns to Me, then unto Me is your return and I shall (then) tell you all that you did (in the world). (Luqman 31:15)

A person who believes in the unity of Allah will never ask any one to associate any other person with Allah. Only an unbeliever can do so. The Qur'an in these verses talks about such unbelieving parents and reminds us that if parents force their children to join partners with Allah, the children should not obey them, but should still treat them with *Ehsan*. It is clear from these verses that if parents invite children to commit a sin, the children should not obey them, but should still love and treat them with kindness and compassion.

Spending on parents

They ask you, what they should spend (in charity); Say: whatever wealth you spend (in charity) is good, it is for the parents and kindred and orphans and those in want and for the wayfarers, and whatever you do that is good, Allah knows it well. (Baqarah 2:215)

This verse again reminds us the position of our parents. It states that whatever we want to spend in the cause of Allah, it should begin with the parents rather than any other person in the family or community. Thus if someone spends money on his family members or donates for a noble cause in the community, but ignores the rights of his parents, he disobeys Allah. Our first duty is to take care of the needs of our parents and to treat them with *Ehsan*, even in spending money.

PARENTS—DUTIES AND OBLIGATIONS

Leaving money for parents

It is prescribed that when death approaches any of you, if he leaves any goods, he should make a bequest to parents and next of kin according to reasonable usage ; this is due for the God-fearing (Baqarah 2 : 180)

Islam is the only Deen that establishes a social system where inheritance is given not only in descending but in ascending order as well. All other systems of the world have laws governing the inheritance for descendants. This verse reminds us that our first duty is towards our parents even when making a will of inheritance.

Being thankful to parents

Show gratitude to Me and to your parents ; to Me is your (final) goal. (Luqman 31 : 14)

As one cannot count the blessings of Allah, one cannot count the blessings of parents. The Qur'an, therefore, commands us to be thankful first to Allah and then to our parents. Being thankful does not mean simply saying "thank you". It calls for having an attitude in life that should reflect our gratitude towards Allah and then to our parents.

Being thankful on behalf of parents

And he (Solomon) said : O my lord ! Arrange things for me so that I may be thankful for your favours which you have bestowed upon me and my parents, and that I do good deeds that will please you, and admit me by your Grace to the ranks of your righteous servants. (Namal 27 : 19)

At length, when he (man) reaches the age of full strength and attains (an age of) forty years, he

| FAMILY LIFE AND SOCIAL OBLIGATIONS IN ISLAM

says : O Lord ! Grant me that I may be grateful to you for your favours which you have bestowed upon me, and upon both of my parents, and that I may be righteous, such as you may approve and be gracious to me ; truly have I turned to you and truly do I submit (to you) in Islam ; Such are those from whom We shall accept the best of their deeds and pass by their ill deeds. (Ahqaf 46 : 15-16)

These verses describe the attribute of those Believers whose good deeds are accepted and bad deeds are forgiven by Allah. One of their attributes is that they are thankful to Allah for His favours on them and simultaneously thankful to Allah for His favours bestowed upon their parents.

Praying for parents

And out of kindness, lower to them the wings of humility and say : My Lord ! bestow on them your Mercy as they cherished me in childhood. (Bani Israel 17 : 24)

No matter how kind and caring we may be towards our parents, we cannot give them every thing that they deserve or need. The Qur'an is, therefore, reminding us that we should also pray for our parents that Allah may bestow His Mercy upon them and bless them with the things that we are unable to provide them.

Reminder for special position of mother

We have enjoined on man (to be good) to his parents ; His mother bore him in weakness after weakness. (Luqman 31 : 14)

We have enjoined on man Eshan to his parents ; In pain did his mother bear him, and in pain did she give birth. (Ahqaf 46 : 15)

PARENTS—DUTIES AND OBLIGATIONS

These verses are self-explanatory and call for having an extra regard for our mothers.

Prophet Noah's prayer for his parents

My Lord ! Forgive me, my parents, all those who enter my home in Faith, and all Believing men and Believing women, and to the wrongdoers grant no increase but in destruction. (Noah 71 :28)

Prophet Ibrahim's prayer for his parents

O Our Lord ! Cover (us) with your forgiveness, me and my parents, and (all) Believers on the Day that the reckoning will be established. (Ibrahim 14 :41)

Prophet Yahya's (John) and his parents

O Yahya ! Take hold of the Book with might, and We gave him wisdom as a youth and compassion. (for all) from Our presence and purity, and he was devout, and kind to his parents and he was not arrogant, rebellious. (Maryam 19 : 12-14)

Prophet Esa (Jesus) and his parents

He (Jesus) said (in the cradle) : I am indeed a servant of Allah ; He has given me revelation and made me a Prophet ; And He made me blessed wherever I may be, and has enjoined on me Salat and Zakat as long as I live, and made me kind towards my mother and not arrogant and rebellious (Maryam 19 : 30-32)

As Muslims, we believe in all the prophets of Allah. The Qur'an reminds us that other prophets have also been

FAMILY LIFE AND SOCIAL OBLIGATIONS IN ISLAM

kind and compassionate towards their parents and also remembered them in their supplications. Needless to say, we should follow the conduct of Allah's prophets by honouring the due rights and obligations of our parents.

COMMANDMENTS IN AHADITH

Ahadith give us more detailed account of the rights and obligations towards parents. They also describe the blessings for honouring the rights of parents and the punishment for disobeying them. Following are a few related Ahadith :

Importance of obedience to parents

Anas ibn Malik related that Rasulullah s.a.w. was asked about the major sins and he answered : They are : To associate something or someone with Allah, to disobey one's parents, to wrong them or injure them, to kill someone unlawfully, and to give false evidence. (Bukhari)

Abdullah ibn Mas'ud reported that he asked Rasulullah s.a.w. : Which action is most acceptable to Allah ? He answered :

Performing *Salat* at its due time.

I asked : What comes next ? He answered :

Benevolence towards parents.

I then asked : What comes next ? He answered :

Striving in the cause of Allah.

(Bukhari, Muslim)

Abdullah ibn 'Amr ibn 'As narrated that a man came to Rasulullah s.a.w. and said : I have come to make a covenant with you to migrate and also to fight in the cause of Allah. He inquired if his

PARENTS—DUTIES AND OBLIGATIONS

parents were living. The man answered : Indeed both of them are living. He then said to him :
Go back to your parents and serve them well.
(Bukhari, Muslim)

Based on this Hadith, the scholars state that if it is not a state of emergency, a person is not allowed to go to Jihad and even leave his town for learning Deen without the permission of his parents. The following Hadith also states the same thing.

Abu Sa'eed Khudri narrated that a man migrated from Yemen to Madina with the intention of engaging in Jihad. Rasulullah s.a.w. asked him if he had any relatives in Yemen. The man answered that his parents were there. Rasulullah s.a.w. asked him if he had migrated after taking their permission. The man answered : No. He then told him :

Go back to your parents and seek their permission to migrate. If they give you permission, then go and engage in Jihad. If they do not give you the permission, then stay with them and serve them well. (Abu Daud, Ahmed)

Hijrat and Jihad (migration and fighting for the cause of Allah) are two of the dearest things to Allah. However, if someone's parents are old or sick, he is exempted from these acts. Serving his parents well, then, becomes his first duty and this will bring him the same rewards as those for Hijrat and Jihad. It is clear from these Ahadith that if someone leaves his parents in old age or during their sickness because of some worldly desires and needs, he is guilty of a grave sin.

Respecting parents of other people

Abdullah ibn Umar reported that Rasulullah s.a.w. said :

FAMILY LIFE AND SOCIAL OBLIGATIONS IN ISLAM

One of the greatest sin is the man's abusing his own parents. They inquired : Does any man abuse his parents ? He answered :

A man abuses the father of a person, who then abuses his own father (in return), and he abuses the mother of a man, who then abuses his own mother (in return). (Bukhari, Muslim)

This is the beauty and blessing of Islam, that it teaches us not only to love and respect our own parents, but to have similar regards for the parents of others as well.

Significance of parents' rights

Abu Umama related that a man asked : O Rasulullah s.a.w. What are the rights of parents over the children, and he answered :

They are your Paradise or your Hell.
(Ibn Majah)

The Qur'an has repeatedly stated that the rights of parents are next to those of Allah. If we honour them, we shall obey Allah and thus hope to enter Paradise. If we disregard them, we then disobey Allah and may thus enter Hell.

Special care of parents in old age

Abu Hurairah reported that Rasulullah s.a.w. said : May his nose be rubbed in sand, may his nose be rubbed in sand, may his nose be rubbed in sand, he who found his parents, one or both of them approaching old age and did not enter Paradise through serving them. (Muslim)

PARENTS—DUTIES AND OBLIGATIONS

“May his nose be rubbed in sand” is a form of rebuke. This Hadith reminds us that when parents reach old age, Paradise comes to our home. If we wish to enter Paradise, we should take utmost care of our parents and serve them well.

Special status of mother

Abu Hurairah related that a man asked Rasulullah s.a.w. : Who is most worthy of my good treatment ?

He answered :

Your mother.

The man asked : Who comes next ? and he answered :

Your mother.

The man then asked again : Who comes next ? and he answered :

Your mother.

The man then inquired a fourth time, and he answered :

Your father. (Bukhari, Muslim)

The position of parents in Islam is next to that of Allah and His Prophet. The position of the mother, however, is three times more important than that of the father. The commentators of the Hadith say that this is because of three special hardships which the mothers undergo for their children, namely, pregnancy, delivery and feeding during the early years of their lives.

It is stated that once Jareeh's mother called him while he was engaged in Salat. Jareeh still continued his Salat. When Rasulullah s.a.w. came to know of this, he said :

If Jareeh had the knowledge, he should have known that responding to a mother's call is more important

FAMILY LIFE AND SOCIAL OBLIGATIONS IN ISLAM

than praying before the Lord. (Fatah al Bari, commentary of Bukhari)

The commentators of the Hadith add that this refers only to voluntary (Nafl) Salat. On the other hand, if parents call their children during an emergency, they should break their Salat and respond to their call even if they are engaged in a Fardh (mandatory) Salat.

It is stated that a man brought his old mother to the Haram. He put her on his back and started circling around the Kaba. He saw Rasulullah S.A.W. and asked him: Have I now completed my duty towards my mother? Rasulullah S.A.W. answered him: You have not fulfilled the right equal to one breath of your mother.

(Commentary of the Qur'an by Ibn Katheer Volume : 3)

Muawiyah ibn Jahema narrated that a person came to Rasulullah S.A.W. to seek his advice to join the battle for the cause of Islam. He asked if his mother was living. When the man replied, 'yes' Rasulullah S.A.W. said :

Then go back and stay close to your mother, because Paradise lies at her feet. (Ahmed, Baihaqi, Nasai)

This Hadith commands the children to stay close to their parents, especially their mother. It also reminds them to serve their mother as best as they can since Paradise lies under her feet. These basic teachings of Islam give a very respected and dignified position to mothers in a Muslim community. She is the center of love and respect of all family members till her last breath of life. Lately, Western society has also realized the importance of mother. They

PARENTS—DUTIES AND OBLIGATIONS

express it by earmarking one day of the year as “mother’s day”. All the children come together on that day and show their love and affection to their mothers. Unfortunately, in most cases these mothers pass their old ages in a nursing home. On the other hand, every single day in the life of a Muslim mother is a “mother’s day” and she never ends her life in a nursing home.

Special regards for mother’s sister

Abdullah Ibn Umar related that a man came to Rasulullah s.a.w. and said : O the Messenger of Allah ! I have committed a sin. Is there any way of repentance for me ? He inquired if his mother was living. When the man said, ‘no’, he inquired if his mother’s sister was living. When the man answered, ‘yes’, he said :

Then serve her well. (Tirmidhi)

This Hadith teaches us two basic things. First, if a person has committed a sin and thus displeased Allah, he can gain Allah’s pleasure back by serving his mother. Second, if his mother is not alive, he can still gain Allah’s pleasure back by serving his mother’s sister.

Bar’a ibn Azib narrated that Rasulullah s.a.w. said :
A mother’s sister has the same status as a mother.
(Trimidhi)

Kindness even to non-Muslim mother

Asmah bint Abu Bakar reported that her mother, while she was a polytheist, came to visit her in Madina. She asked Rasulullah s.a.w. that her mother was still an unbeliever but was expecting something from her ; should she gratify her ? He said :

FAMILY LIFE AND SOCIAL OBLIGATIONS IN ISLAM

Yes, be benevolent towards your mother. (Bukhari, Muslim)

Asmah was the elder sister of the Prophet's noble wife Aishah from a different mother. Abu Bakr had divorced her even before he became a Muslim. She did not accept Islam and came to see her daughter Asmah after the treaty of Hudaibiyah, when the unbelievers were allowed to visit Madina. It was at that time that Asmah inquired of the Prophet as to how she should treat her mother. He told her to be kind and considerate towards her mother, even though she was an unbeliever.

Position of father

Abdulah bin Amr narrated that Rasulullah s.a.w. said : The pleasure of the Lord is in the pleasure of the father, and the displeasure of the Lord is in the displeasure of the father. (Tirmidhi)

Abdullah ibn Umar reported : I had a wife whom I loved but my father Umar disliked her. He asked me to divorce her, but I refused. Umar went to Rasulullah s.a.w. and mentioned this to him. Rasulullah s.a.w. then called me and asked me to divorce her.

(Abu Daud, Tirmidhi)

(It is stated that ibn Umar then divorced his wife.)

It should be noted that the right to marry and divorce in Islam belongs only to the husband. If the parents do not like someone's wife, they can not force their son to divorce her. Since Umar was one of the most righteous Sahaba, the Prophet asked Abdullah ibn Umar to honour the wish of his father.

Abu Hurairah related that Rasulullah s.a.w. said :

PARENTS—DUTIES AND OBLIGATIONS

No son can repay his father, unless he should find him a slave and set him free. (Muslim)

Abdullah ibn Umar narrated that Rasulullah s.a.w. said :

One of the highest virtues (in Islam) is that a person should be benevolent towards his father's friends. (Muslim)

Abdullah ibn Umar reported that Rasulullah s.a.w. said :

Three invocations are granted without doubt therein ; the invocation of a father (for his children), the invocation of a traveller (for the cause of Allah) and the invocation of an oppressed person.

(Abu Daud, Ibn Majah, Tirmidhi)

Though the position of a mother in Islam is three times more important than that of a father, this in no way lessens the role and position of a father. This Hadith gives a very unique position to a father and states that Allah will not reject the invocation of a father for his children. We should therefore try to seek the pleasure of our father as much as we try to seek the pleasure of our mother.

Parent's rights after death

Abu Osaid Sayedi related : We were close to Rasulullah s.a.w. when a man from the tribe of Banu Salamah approached him and asked : O Rasulullah s.a.w. is there any obedience to parents left upon me after their demise that I should honour ? He replied : Yes, pray for them, ask Allah's forgiveness for them, fulfill their promises, exercise benevolence towards those related to you through them, and also honour their friends (Abu Daud, Ibn Majah)

FAMILY LIFE AND SOCIAL OBLIGATIONS IN ISLAM

The rights of parents in Islam are so unique and respected that they do not come to an end after their death. This Hadith tells us a few of their basic rights after death.

Abdullah ibn Umar reported that Rasulullah s.a.w. said :

The most excellent form of obedience to parents is that a man befriends the friends of his father after he has passed away. (Muslim)

Abdullah ibn Dinar reported that Abdullah ibn Umar met a Bedouin on his way to Makkah. He greeted him and asked him if he was so and so the son of so and so. The man replied, "yes". Abdullah ibn Umar gave him his donkey and asked him to ride it. He also gave him his turban and asked him to cover his head with it. Some of his companions told him: May Allah bless you ! He is just a Bedouin and the Bedouins are pleased with only a little thing. You gave him your donkey and turban whereas you needed them yourself. Abdullah ibn Umar answered : His father was the friend of my father and I have heard Rasulullah s.a.w. saying :

One of the most virtuous act is that a person should be benevolent towards his father's friends and their family members. (Muslim)

Though this Hadith only refers to a father, and since the rights of a mother in Islam are three times more than that of a father, it follows that we should give a better treatment to the family members and friends of our mother as well.

Abdullah ibn Abbas narrated that Sa'ad ibn 'As said to Rasulullah s.a.w. : My mother has died. Before she died, she made a vow, which she had to honour, but she could not do so. He said :

PARENTS—DUTIES AND OBLIGATIONS

Honour the vow of your mother on her behalf.
(Bukhari, Muslim)

Anas ibn Malik reported that Rasulullah s.a.w. said :
Often it so happens that one or both the parents of
a person pass away, while during their life-time he
does not serve them well. He thus deprives himself
of their good pleasure. He then remembers them in
his supplications and seeks Allah's forgiveness for
them. Allah then changes his name from the record
of disobedient persons to that of obedient ones.
(Baihaqi)

This Hadith gives glad tidings to those who have lost
one or both of their parents. No one can be sure that he
has fulfilled the due rights of his parents. We should
therefore try our utmost to serve our parents during their
life-time and remember them in our supplications after their
death. This will not only help them, but would also
compensate for our shortcomings in serving them during
their life-time.

Blessings for obeying parents

Abdullah ibn Abbas reported that Rasulullah s.a.w.
said :

Whoever gets up at dawn being obedient to Allah
regarding his obligations to parents, two doors of
Paradise are open for him in the morning. If he has
one of the parents alive, then only one door is
open for him. Whoever is disobedient to Allah
regarding his obligations to parents, two doors of
Hell are open for him. If he has only one of the
parents alive, then only one door is open for him.

A man inquired : Even if his parents have been
cruel to him. Rasulullah s.a.w. replied :

FAMILY LIFE AND SOCIAL OBLIGATIONS IN ISLAM

Even though his parents have been cruel to him,
even though his parents have been cruel to him,
even though his parents have been cruel to him.
(Baihaqi)

Jaber related that Rasulullah s.a.w. said :

Whoever has three attributes in him, Allah will
make his death easy and also admit him to Paradise.
These are : Mercy to the weak, kindness to parents,
and doing good to slaves (and servants). (Baihaqi)

Thoban narrated that Rasulullah s.a.w. said :

Nothing but supplication can annul predestination,
and nothing but obedience to parents can prolong
life. A man is deprived of his provisions for the
sins he commits. (Ibn Majah)

Regarding the prolonging of life, the scholars say that
it refers to the amount of virtuous deeds in life and not
the increase in the number of years. One who is obedient
to parents will get enough time and leisure for doing good
deeds in his life. On the other hand, the one who is
disobedient to parents will be afflicted with diseases, pains,
and worries and be deprived of the opportunities of doing
good deeds in his life.

Abdullah ibn Umar related that Rasulullah s.a.w.
said :

Obeey your parents and treat them with kindness, for
if you do so, then your children will obey you and
treat you with kindness (Tabrani)

There is a folk tale that may or may not be true but
carries a good message. It is said that there was a man
who got tired of serving his old father, so he decided to
kill him. One day he wrapped his father in a sheet and
took him to a well. As he was ready to throw him in the

PARENTS—DUTIES AND OBLIGATIONS

well, his father told him that he had a last wish and would like him to honour it. His son asked him, what it was. The father replied that his last wish was that he should not throw him in that particular well, but in some other well. The son was amazed and asked him the reason for this wish. His father then told him that he had himself thrown his father in that well. The son got the message and immediately took his father back home and served him well all his life.

Aishah reported that Rasulullah s.a.w. once said : I was sleeping and saw in my dream that I was in Paradise. I heard there some one reciting the Qur'an and inquired : Who is this slave of Allah reciting the Qur'an in Paradise ? I was told that he was Haritha ibn No'man.

Rasulullah s.a.w. later said that Haritha ibn No'man was very obedient to his mother and served her well. (Baihaqi)

Admonition for disobeying parents

Abu Barkah Nufai ibn Harith related that Rasulullah s.a.w. said :

Shall I tell you what are the major sins ?

He repeated this three times and we said :

Certainly O Rasulullah s.a.w. ! He then said :

Associating others with Allah, disobedience to parents.

The narrator added that Rasulullah s.a.w. had been leaning against a pillow, but suddenly he sat up erect and said :

And telling a lie and giving a false evidence.

He then repeated the last sentence so many times that we wished he would stop. (Bukhari)

Anas ibn Malik reported that some one asked Rasulullah s.a.w. about major sins and he replied :

FAMILY LIFE AND SOCIAL OBLIGATIONS IN ISLAM

To associate anyone with Allah, to disobey the parents and cause them pain and injury, to kill unlawfully, and to give false evidence. (Bukhari)

It is important to note in this Hadith the order in which the Prophet described the major sins in Islam. Disobedience to parents is a sin next in gravity to that of polytheism and more serious than murder and false evidence.

Mughirah ibn Shu'bah narrated that Rasulullah s.a.w. said :

Allah has forbidden for you : Disobedience to parents, miserliness, false claims, and burying alive of females, and has disapproved for you : idle talk, too much asking of questions, and waste of provision. (Bukhari, Muslim)

Punishment for disobedience to parents

Abu Barakah reported that Rasulullah s.a.w. said : Almighty Allah may forgive all sins He pleases except disobedience to parents ; and He hastens punishment in this life before death for one who is disobedient to parents. (Baihaqi)

Three Unique Incidents

Jaber ibn Abdullah related that a man came to Rasulullah s.a.w. and reported against his father saying that his father wanted to take away the material things from him. Rasulullah s.a.w. asked the man to come back to him with his father. Archangel Jibrael then came to Rasulullah s.a.w. and told him that when the father comes he should ask him to narrate those words which he had said about

PARENTS—DUTIES AND OBLIGATIONS

his son, that even his own ears did not hear. Later when the father and son came to Rasulullah S.A.W., he informed the father about the complaint of his son. The father informed Rasulullah S.A.W. that he could confirm that he took the money from his son only to spend on his maternal and paternal aunt and on his basic needs. Rasulullah S.A.W. then told them it was enough for the explanation of the dispute. He then asked the father to narrate the words which he said in his heart about his son, the words which even his ears did not hear. The father exclaimed and said : O Messenger of Allah ! Allah increases our faith in you in every matter of dealings in our life. In fact I did compose a few verses of a poem in my heart and my ears have not yet heard these words. He then narrated the following verses :

I nurtured and nourished you in your childhood and was responsible for your needs even when you grew up. If there was a night when you were sick, I kept awake all night for your care and comfort. I passed the night crying as if it was I and not you who was sick. I was always afraid of your death, though I knew that its time was predestined. At last you then reached the age that I desired and prayed for. Alas ! you then started paying me back my dues in the form of rude manners and harsh language. Alas ! if you could not give me the due rights of a father, you could at least treat me as a good neighbour would treat his neighbour. Oh ! If you had given me only the due rights of a neighbour and would not have been miserly towards me in my own belongings.

When Rasulullah S.A.W. heard this, he grabbed the son with his shirt collar and said :

FAMILY LIFE AND SOCIAL OBLIGATIONS IN ISLAM

Go away ! You and all that you possess belong to your father. (Commentary of the Qur'an by Imam Qartabi Vol :6, P 244)

Abdullah ibn Umar reported that Rasulullah s.a.w. narrated the following incident :

Three men were once overtaken by rain and took shelter in the cave of a mountain. A rock fell down and completely covered the mouth of the cave. The three were completely trapped in the cave. They said to one another : Let each one of us recall one of the virtuous acts that he performed sincerely for the pleasure of Allah, and then supplicate Allah therewith to remove this rock from the cave.

One of them said : O Allah ! I had old and weak parents and also young children for whom I used to pasture sheep. Whenever I returned home at night, I gave milk first to my parents and then to my children. One day I returned home late at night and found that both of my parents had fallen asleep. I took milk to them as usual and remained standing near them. I did not want to awaken them and also did not want to give the milk first to my children. Though my children cried with hunger, I kept waiting for my parents till it was dawn. O Allah ! if You know that I did this act only to seek Your pleasure, then make an opening for us so that we can see the horizon. Accordingly Allah made an opening for them in the cave.

The second man narrated this incident. He was in love with one of his cousins and was about to have sex with her when she reminded him of Allah. He then stopped from committing that sin. He then prayed : O Allah ! If You know that I did this act only to seek your pleasure, then make a further opening in the cave. Allah accepted his prayer and the cave had a bigger opening.

PARENTS—DUTIES AND OBLIGATIONS

The third man narrated this incident. He went into a business partnership with a person who disappeared. He then took care of the business alone and kept an account of his partner's share of profit. When his partner returned, he paid him his share of the profit. He then prayed to Allah : O Allah ! if You know that I did this act only to seek Your pleasure, make an opening for us of what still remains. Allah accepted his prayer and the mouth of cave was completely open and they could escape from it. (Bukhari, Muslim)

Abdullah ibn Oofī reported that there was a man named Alqamah. He was very punctual in his Salat (daily prayers) and Siyam (fasting). When the time of his death approached, people instructed him to recite the Kalimah, but he could not do so. His wife sent someone to inform Rasulullah s.a.w. of this condition. He asked if his parents were living. He was informed that Alqamah's mother was living. Rasulullah s.a.w. sent for the mother, who immediately came to him. He asked her opinion about Alqamah. She replied that he was a pious man, but preferred his wife over her and disobeyed her. She was therefore unhappy with him. Rasulullah s.a.w. asked her to forgive him, but she refused. He then asked Bilal to collect wood, burn it and throw Alqamah in the burning fire. The mother became very worried on hearing this and asked Rasulullah s.a.w. if he really intended to burn Alqamah in fire. He then said :

Yes ! The punishment of Allah is far more than this punishment. By Allah ! as long as you are unhappy with your son, neither his Salat nor any act of charity is accepted by Allah.

FAMILY LIFE AND SOCIAL OBLIGATIONS IN ISLAM

Alqamah's mother then said : O Messenger of Allah ! I want you and all those present to be my witness that I have forgiven Alqamah. Rasulullah s.a.w. then sent someone to ascertain the condition of Alqamah. He came back with the good news that Alqamah had died reciting the Kalimah. Rasulullah s.a.w. then himself went to his funeral and said :

Whoever from amongst Muhajirs (immigrants) and Ansars (helpers) will be disobedient to his mother or displeases her, he will then have the curse of Allah, His angels and all people. Allah will not accept either his Fardh (mandatory) or his Nafl (voluntary prayers) until he repents, serves his mother well and pleases her. (Tabrani)

The Prophet in this Hadith addressed Muhajirs and Ansars because they were the only persons present around him at that time. Furthermore, he made mention of only the mother because this incident referred to the pleasure of a mother. It is , however, clear that this commandment is for all the Believers and calls for seeking the pleasure of both parents, especially the mother. We should realize that Alqamah was a very pious person and was very punctual in his Salat and Siyam. He was also a companion of the Prophet. None of these things brought any help to him at the time of his death. He was deprived of the blessings of reciting Kalimah only because he had displeased his mother. We should also recall the Hadith that states : Whoever dies in such a state that his last words are the recitation of Kalimah, he shall enter Paradise. No one knows when the time of our death will come. We should therefore hasten to seek the good pleasure of our parents, especially our mothers, otherwise we may also be deprived of reciting the Kalimah at the time of our death.

CHAPTER 2

CHILDREN—RIGHTS AND OBLIGATIONS

Just as treating parents with *Ehsan* has been enjoined upon children, the Qur'an and Hadith have also enjoined the rights and obligations of children upon parents. Love and care of children is an integral part of human nature, hence the Qur'an outlines basic principles regarding treatment of children and leaves the details to the good judgement of parents.

COMMANDMENTS IN THE QUR'AN

According to the teachings of the Qur'an, the material things of this world and our children are two criteria of our *Eman* and good conduct. Allah has given us these things as a test to find out if we can enjoy the material things of this world and our children, and still remember our duties and obligations towards Him. Blind love and extra care for the children often leads parents to ignore their duty towards Allah. This is one of the most common weakness of parents. The Qur'an has repeatedly warned us to guard ourselves against this weakness.

O You who believe let not your wealth or (the love of) your children divert you from the remembrance of Allah ; Those who do so, surely they are the losers. (Munafiqoon 63:9)

FAMILY LIFE AND SOCIAL OBLIGATIONS IN ISLAM

(Your) Wealth and children are an allurements of the life of this world ; but good deeds that endure are best in the sight of Allah for reward, and best as (the bases for) hopes. (Kahf 18:46)

Your wealth and your children are only a temptation ; whereas with Allah is an immense reward. (Taghabun 64:15)

Another human weakness is parents' fear that children will become a financial burden upon them and that they may not feed them properly. Hence they adopt various means to kill them or stop their birth by unnatural means. Lately, this has become a major social problem of the Western society and has resulted in numerous crimes and social disorders. The Qur'an has warned us against this weakness as well.

Lost are those who slay their children from folly, without knowledge, and forbid that which Allah has provided for them, inventing (lies) against Allah ; they have indeed gone astray and heed no guidance. (An'am 6:140)

Kill not your children on the plea of want ; We provide sustenance for you and (also) for them. (An'am 6:153)

Kill not your children for fear of want ; We shall provide sustenance for them ; as well as for you, verily the killing of them is a great sin. (Bani Israel 17:31)

The birth of female children was looked upon as a bad omen by the pre-Islamic society of Arabs. The practice is still continued in many parts of the world, especially in India. The Qur'an condemned this practice and restored the respect and dignity of female children.

CHILDREN—RIGHTS AND OBLIGATIONS

When the news is brought to them of the birth of a female (child), his face darkens and he is filled with inward grief. With shame does he hide himself from his people, because of the bad news he has heard, shall he retain it on (sufferance and) contempt, or bury it in sand?

Ah, what an evil choice they decide on.

(Nahl 16:58-59)

The unbelievers of Makkah used to claim that Allah had daughters, while they themselves were ashamed of fathering female children. The Qur'an describes this :

What ! Has He (Allah) taken daughters (for himself) out of what He creates, and granted to you sons for choice ? When news is brought to them (of the birth) of what he sets up as a likeness to (Allah) Most Gracious (i.e., a daughter), his face darkens, and he is filled with inward grief.

(Zukhruf 43:16-17)

The Qur'an commands parents to provide the basic needs of the children. It states the duties of the mother and father separately.

Mothers should suckle their children for two whole years ; (that is) for those who wish to complete the suckling, the duty of feeding and clothing of nursing mothers in a seemly manner is upon the father of the child. (Baqarah 2:233)

The Qur'an also commands that parents should provide basic Islamic teachings to their children. Salat is the second most important pillar of Islam after *Eman*. The Qur'an commands that parents should enjoin Salat on their children and should also be regular in their own practice of Salat.

FAMILY LIFE AND SOCIAL OBLIGATIONS IN ISLAM

Enjoin Salat on your family, and be constant therein. (Ta Ha 20:13)

The Qur'an also commands that parents should give their children the best of education and training that can help them to be good Muslims. If parents fail in their duty, children may be misguided and may thus earn Allah's wrath and punishment. The Qur'an states :

O you who believe ! Save yourself and your family from a Fire whose fuel is man and stone over which are (appointed) angels stern (and) severe, who flinch not (from executing) the commands they receive from Allah, but do (precisely) what they are commanded. (Tahreem 66:6)

This is a very comprehensive commandment and calls for a total commitment from parents for the teaching and training of their children. Parents are supposed to give their children the best of education, guidance, training, love, home, and facilities that may help them to live a righteous life. If the children are misled due to some negligence of their parents, they shall be equally responsible for the sins of their children.

COMMANDMENTS IN AHADITH

Ahadith provide us a more detailed and comprehensive description of the rights of children upon parents. Following are a few basic commandments :

Adhan in the ears of newborn

Abu Rafai reported that when Fatimah gave birth to Hasan, Rasulullah s.a.w. proclaimed Adhan in his ears. (Abu Daud, Tirmidhi)

CHILDREN—RIGHTS AND OBLIGATIONS

The very first right of every child is that as soon as he is born, the parents should proclaim Adhan in his ears. The first words the child should hear are the proclamation that Allah is His Lord and that Muhammad s.a.w. is His Messenger. We know that the last right of every Muslim is that when he dies, people should offer a congregational funeral Salat for his forgiveness. Furthermore, each congregational Salat is preceded by Adhan, except the funeral Salat. It therefore follows that the Adhan for funeral prayer is given in the ears of a newborn at the time of his birth. The Hadith teaches us that our life is as short as the interval between the proclamation of Adhan and the start of Salat. We should therefore make the best use of each and every moment of our life and should devote our time to the deeds that may help us in our eternal life in the Hereafter. The proclamation of Adhan in the ears of the newborn also shows us the importance of Salat in the life of a Believer.

It is also reported in Ahadith that the Prophet s.a.w. instructed to proclaim Adhan in the right ear and Iqamah in the left ear of newborns (Tabrani). Furthermore, Ahadith also state that when Adhan is proclaimed, Satan runs away as far as the voice of Adhan is carried. (Bukhari, Muslim). Thus proclaiming Adhan in the ears of newborns is a safeguard against the evils of Satan as well.

Tahneek and supplication

Aishah reported that the people would bring their newborns to Rasulullah s.a.w. He would pray for them and perform the act of "Tahneek" (Muslim)

The act of "Tahneek" is explained in the following Hadith.

FAMILY LIFE AND SOCIAL OBLIGATIONS IN ISLAM

Asmah bint Abu Bakar narrated that when Abdullah ibn Zubair was born, she took him to Rasulullah s.a.w. He held him in his arms, chewed a date, and put a part of the chewed date in the month of Abdullah. He then prayed for him. (Bukhari, Muslim)

The Hadith suggests that parents should take their newborns to an elderly and righteous person in the family. He should then pray for the child and also perform "Tahneek" with the newborn. This is one of the Sunnah that is not in practice now. We should make a sincere effort to revive this Sunnah of our beloved Prophet.

Celebration of Aqiqah

Boraidah reported : Our custom during the days of ignorance was that when a son was born, the family would slaughter a goat and cover the head of the newborn with the blood. Since we became Muslims, we slaughter a goat on the seventh day after the birth of a newborn, shave his head and cover it with saffron. (Abu Daud)

Umme Karaz narrated that she heard Rasulullah s.a.w. saying :

Two goats should be slaughtered when the newborn is a male and one, when the newborn is a female. The goats could be male or female. (Abu Daud, Nasai)

The scholars say that the slaughtering of two goats for a male and one for a female is only a recommendation. It is permissible to slaughter only one goat for the newborn. This is based on the following Ahadith.

CHILDREN—RIGHTS AND OBLIGATIONS

Abdullah ibn Abbas narrated that Rasulullah s.a.w. performed Aqiqah for his grandsons Hasan and Husain and slaughtered one goat for each of them. (Abu Daud)

Ali ibn Abi Talib reported that Rasulullah s.a.w. slaughtered one goat for the Aqiqah of his grandson Hasan. He asked his daughter Fatimah to shave her son's head and to give in charity silver equal to the weight of his hair. (Tirmidhi)

Aqiqah is not only the right of a newborn, but also represents an important Islamic custom. The meat obtained is distributed among family members and friends. This brings a feeling of happiness and joy in the community. Moreover, when the father performs Aqiqah for his newborn, he declares the acceptance of the newborn to be his own child and shuts all doors of suspicion for his wife and family. Giving of charity, on the other hand, helps the poor and needy in the community and also serves as a means of bringing Allah's blessings for the newborn and the family.

Tasmiyah : Naming a child

Abu Darda reported that Rasulullah s.a.w. said :

On the Day of Judgement, you will be called by your names and the names of your fathers, hence give good names to your children. (Ahmed, Abu Daud)

Abdullah ibn Abbas narrated that Rasulullah s.a.w. said :

The right of a child upon the father is that he should give him a good name and decorate him with good manners. (Baihaqi)

FAMILY LIFE AND SOCIAL OBLIGATIONS IN ISLAM

Abdullah ibn Umar reported that Rasulullah s.a.w. said :

Amongst your names, the dearest to Allah are Abdullah and Abdul Rehman. (Muslim)

The Sunnah of the Prophet suggests that the names of other Prophets and names with good meanings are also recommended. The Prophet named his son Ibrahim and his grand-sons Hasan and Husain. It was also his Sunnah that if someone had given a bad or undesirable name to a child, he would change it. Imam Muslim reported that the name of one of Umar's daughter was Asia and the Prophet changed it to Jameela. Similarly, the name of Abu Salma's daughter was Barra, which means righteous. When the Prophet came to know of this name, he said that it represented a claim for righteousness and changed it to Zainab. Imam Bukhari reported that Rasulullah s.a.w. said : Name your children after my name, but not after my title *i.e.* Abul Qasim.

The first spoken words of a child

Abdullah ibn Abbas related that Rasulullah s.a.w. said :

Teach your children to speak : La llaha il Lallah (There is no God except Allah) as the first spoken words in their lives and instruct men to recite the same at the time of their death. (Baihaqi)

This Hadith reiterates the importance of the Kalimah (there is no God except Allah). First, the Prophet recommended that parents proclaim it into the ears of newborns. Second, he recommended them to teach their children to speak it as the first words in their lives. Third, he also recommended us to recite it as the last words in our life. The Hadith also suggests

CHILDREN—RIGHTS AND OBLIGATIONS

that the first words proclaimed in the ear and the first words spoken by the tongue have an effect on human growth and personality.

Teaching of good manners

Anas ibn Malik reported that Rasulullah s.a.w. said : Give due respect and regard to your children and decorate them with the best of manners. (Abu Daud)

Sa'eed ibn Al'As narrated that Rasulullah s.a.w. said : No father can give his child a better gift than teaching him good manners. (Tirmidhi)

Jaber reported that Rasulullah s.a.w. said : The teaching of good manners by a person to his children is better than giving a Sa'a in charity. (Tirmidhi)

Sa'a is a measure of Arabic weight. Giving of charity is a virtuous deed, but teaching good manners to children in Islam is more virtuous than giving of charity.

Abu Hurairah reported that Rasulullah s.a.w. said : Every child is born on the Fitrah (the religion of Islam). His parents then make him a Jew or a Christian or a Magian. He then recited the following verse of the Qur'an : *Set your face truly to the religion being upright, the nature (Fitrah) in which Allah has made mankind ; No change (there is) in the creation of Allah ; that is the true religion ; but most among mankind do not realize it (30:30).* (Bukhari, Muslim)

A Muslim considers the wordly life as a journey towards the eternal life of the Hereafter. He is more concerned with the success of his eternal life than that of

FAMILY LIFE AND SOCIAL OBLIGATIONS IN ISLAM

this worldly life. It therefore, follows that parents should be more concerned with the success of their children in the life Hereafter rather than success in their worldly life. Parents should give the best of teaching and training to their children and ensure an everlasting success for them in the life Hereafter.

Greetings to children

Anas ibn Malik passed by some children and offered them the greetings of "Assalamu Alaikum" and said : Rasulullah s.a.w. used to do the same. (Bukhari, Muslim)

The best way of teaching good manners to our children is by setting good examples for them. When we greet our children, we express our respect and regard towards them. We can then expect the same treatment from them.

Anas ibn Malik related that Rasulullah s.a.w. said : Show respect to your children and adorn them with good manners. (Ibn Majah)

One of the ways for showing respect to our children is to greet them as we greet our elders. Showing respect also means to acknowledge and honour their respective rights in the family and their position in the society.

Setting a good example

Abdullah ibn Amer narrated that once Rasulullah s.a.w. was sitting in my home and my mother called me and promised to give me something. Rasulullah s.a.w. asked her what she wanted to give me. My mother said that she wanted to give me a date. He then said :

CHILDREN—RIGHTS AND OBLIGATIONS

If you had called your child by a deceptive promise, this would have been recorded in your account as a lie on your part. (Muslim)

The Hadith teaches us that parents should serve as role models for their children and should not tell a lie even in ordinary day to day dealings.

Admonition for Salat

‘Amr ibn Shu’aib reported that Rasulullah s.a.w. said : Admonish your children to pray Salat when they are seven years old, spank them if they do not observe it when they are ten years old and then separate them in their beds. (Abu Daud)

The Hadith is the explanation of the Qur’anic commandment : *Save yourselves and your children from the Hell-Fire* (66:6). Most of our habits are formed between the ages of seven and ten. If parents could make their children pray Salat regularly during this period, this would hopefully become a permanent habit of their lives. The Qur’an also states : *Salat restrains from shameful and unjust deeds* (29:45). Salat would thus help our children to stay on the right path and save them from the punishment of Hell-Fire. The Hadith also states that it is the right of every child to have a separate sleeping bed when he is ten years old. At the same time, the Hadith reminds us of the beauty of Islam which gives us guidance in the spiritual as well as the material aspects of our lives.

Teaching of the Qur’an

Mu’az Johainy reported that Rasulullah s.a.w. said: Whoever learned the Qur’an and obeyed its commandments, Allah on the Day of Judgement,

will crown his parents, the glow of which shall be brighter than that of the sun. He then asked : What reward do you expect for the person himself? (Abu Daud, Ahmed)

Ali ibn Abi Talib related that Rasulullah s.a.w. said : Whoever learnt the Qur'an by heart, regarded its Halal as Halal and its Haram as Haram, Allah will enter him in Paradise. Allah will also accept his intercession for ten other persons who have been destined to enter Hell. (Ahmed, Darimi, Ibn Majah, Tirmidhi)

As far as intercession on the Day of Judgement is concerned, Allah will give this right to those whom He wants and these persons will intercede on behalf of others only by Allah's permission. The Qur'an states : *On the Day, the Spirit and the angels will stand in ranks, none shall be allowed to speak, except one who is permitted by (the Lord) Most Gracious, and he will speak (only) what is right* (78:38). According to the above Hadith, a Hafiz will also be given the right to intercede on the Day of Judgement. It should, however, be noted that the unbelievers and hypocrites are destined to enter Hell and no one can intercede on their behalf. The intercession mentioned in this Hadith refers to the Believers who had committed sins and died without seeking Allah's forgiveness. If the parents could give their children the proper knowledge of the Qur'an and could also help them to be a Hafiz, they are sure to receive the intercession of their children.

Love and kindness to children

Abdullah ibn Mas'ud related that Rasulullah s.a.w. said :

CHILDREN—RIGHTS AND OBLIGATIONS

All children are Allah's children, and dearest to Allah are those who treat His children with kindness. (Baihaqi)

The Hadith teaches us to be kind not only to our children but to all children, irrespective of their race, religion or origin.

Aishah reported that a desert Arab came to Rasulullah S.A.W. and was surprised to see him kissing the children. He exclaimed: What! do you kiss children! Rasulullah S.A.W. replied to him:

I cannot help you, if Allah has taken kindness out of your heart. (Bukhari, Muslim)

Abu Hurairah narrated that Rasulullah S.A.W. kissed his grandson, Hasan, in the presence of Aqra ibn Habis, Aqra said: I have ten children and I have never kissed any of them. Rasulullah S.A.W. looked towards him and said:

He who is not kind to others will not receive Allah's kindness. (Bukhari, Muslim)

Practicing the Sunnah of the Prophet is one of the most virtuous deeds that brings Allah's blessings and Thawab. According to these Ahadith, the kissing of children is a Sunnah of our beloved Prophet. We should therefore follow this practice as well.

Equal treatment with all children

Nu'man ibn Bashir reported that his father once took him to Rasulullah S.A.W. and informed him that he had given me one of his slaves. Rasulullah S.A.W. asked my father if he had given a slave to all of his children. My father replied that he had not done so. Rasulullah S.A.W. then told him:

FAMILY LIFE AND SOCIAL OBLIGATIONS IN ISLAM

Remember your duty to Allāh, and be fair to all your children. (Bukhari, Muslim)

The Hadith adds that, after hearing this, Nu'man's father took the slave back from his son. Another version of this Hadith states that Rasulullah s.a.w. said: I do not want to be a witness to an unjust deed. Based on the version of Hadith, a group of Fuqaha regard the unequal or unjust treatment of children as "Haram" (forbidden) in Islam. A few others like Imam Abu Hanifah, Malik and Shafa'i consider this to be "Makrooh" (undesirable). The unequal treatment of children is not only allowed but preferred if there is a genuine need. If, for example, one of the children is permanently sick, disabled or in financial trouble, the parents could give him more love and care than the other children.

Abdullah ibn Abbas narrated that Rasulullah s.a.w. said :

In terms of your presents and financial help, treat your children with justice and equality. If I would have preferred someone in this respect, I would have preferred the girls over boys. (Tabrani)

Based on this Hadith, a group of Fuqaha say that though the portion of inheritance for girls is half than that of boys, the parents during their life-time should treat girls as equal to boys in every respect.

Treatment with girls

Abdullah ibn Abbas related that Rasulullah s.a.w. said :

Whoever becomes the father of a girl, he should neither hurt her nor treat her with contempt nor prefer his sons over her. Allah will grant him

CHILDREN—RIGHTS AND OBLIGATIONS

Paradise in return for the kind treatment of his daughter. (Ahmed, Hakim)

Abdullah ibn Abbas also reported that Rasulullah S.A.W. said :

If anyone is blessed with a daughter, and does not bury her alive, nor prefers his sons over her, Allah will make him enter Paradise. (Abu Daud)

We should recall that during the Pre-Islamic period, Arabs disliked girls so much that if someone was blessed with a newborn daughter, he would bury her alive. Islam not only eradicated this practice, but gave the girls a position equal to that of boys. The glad tiding in this Hadith. "Allah will make him enter Paradise," means that treating girls with respect and honour is one of the means for receiving Allah's Mercy and Rewards. It should, however, be added that in order to receive the blessings of this Hadith and similar ones narrated earlier, one has first to obey Allah in all aspects of his life and then practice this Hadith. If someone disobeys Allah in his life and then treats girls with respect and honour, this act alone may not help him enter Paradise.

Aishah reported : A woman once came to me begging for food with her two daughters. All I could find in my home was single date, that I gave to her. She divided it between her two daughters and ate nothing of it. She then left my home. When Rasulullah S.A.W. came, I told him about this woman. He then said :

Anyone who has daughters and is kind to them will find that on the Day of Judgement, they will serve as a shield for him against Hell. (Bukhari, Muslim)

Anas ibn Malik related that Rasulullah S.A.W. said :

FAMILY LIFE AND SOCIAL OBLIGATIONS IN ISLAM

One who raises two daughters with love until they become mature, he and I, on the Day of Judgement will be like this. Anas added that while saying this, he raised two of his fingers and kept them close together. (Muslim)

Abu Sa'eed Khudri reported that Rasulullah s.a.w. said:

One who took the responsibility of raising three daughters or sisters, treated them well, gave them good training, and also arranged their marriage, his reward with Allah is Paradise. (Abu Daud, Tirmidhi)

Taking care of a divorced or widowed daughter

Soraqah ibn Malik reported that Rasulullah s.a.w. said :

Shall I not tell you the best form of charity ? It is supporting your daughter, who has been returned to you, and who has no earning partner except you. (Ibn Majah)

In the western society, parents often do not feel responsible for their grown-up children. Islam, on the contrary, considers this as one of the basic responsibilities of the parents. Islam also promises special rewards for the care of grown-up daughters, and considers this act as the best form of charity. Thus, Islam gives girls, not only a respected and dignified position, but also safeguards their basic rights and needs. It is because of such noble teachings of Islam that the problem of single mothers does not even exist in a Muslim community. Such women always become a part of someone's household where their material and emotional needs are met either by a father or a brother. The problem of single mothers is a growing issue of the Western society where the number of single

CHILDREN—RIGHTS AND OBLIGATIONS

women living without any material or emotional protection is increasing every day. Western society has yet to find a respectable solution for these women.

Glad tidings to divorced or widowed mothers

Auf ibn Malek Ash'jai reported that Rasulullah s.a.w. said :

I and the women with worn-out cheeks shall be like these two fingers on the Day of Judgement. The worn-out woman is one who has been deprived of her husband, possesses beauty and respect in society, but confines herself to the care of her children, until they mature or die.

The narrator added that while saying this, Rasulullah s.a.w. raised his middle and forefinger. (Abu Daud)

Though Islam encourages the second marriage for the divorced and widowed, the judgement for marriage is left with the women. If a woman chooses not to marry for the love and care of her children, her reward is the good company of the Prophet on the Day of Judgement. It is, however, clear that a single act in life will not bring any rewards on the Day of Judgement. In order to receive this reward a woman has to live a righteous life and also take care of her children.

Spending on children

Abu Mas'ud Badri narrated that Rasulullah s.a.w. said :

When a person spends on his wife and children hoping for a reward from Allah, this is regarded as an act of charity on his part. (Bukhari, Muslim)

Umme Salmah reported : I asked O Messenger of Allah ! shall I have any reward if I spend on my

FAMILY LIFE AND SOCIAL OBLIGATIONS IN ISLAM

children from my first husband ? Rasulullah s.a.w. replied :

Spend on them, for you shall have the reward for whatever you spend on them. (Bukhari, Muslim)

Abu Hurairah related that Rasulullah s.a.w. said :

Out of the Dinar you spend in the cause of Allah, the Dinar you spend in procuring the freedom of a slave, the Dinar you give away in charity to the poor and the Dinar you spend on your wife and children, the highest in respect of reward is the one you spend on your wife and children. (Muslim)

Abdullah ibn 'Amr ibn 'As reported that Rasulullah s.a.w. said :

It is a significant sin for a person to deny the due rights of persons, whose living he controls. (Abu Daud)

Regarding children's marriage

Abu Sa'eed Khudri reported that Rasulullah s.a.w. said :

Whoever is blessed with children, should teach them good manners and when they reach the age of puberty, arrange for their marriage. If parents ignore or postpone this, and the children get involved into forbidden acts, the father will be held responsible for their sins. (Baihaqi)

This does not mean that children will not be responsible for their sins. The Hadith states that it is a duty of parents, especially the father, to arrange for the marriage of their children and if they fail in their duty and the children get involved in sins, the father will be equally responsible for their sins.

CHAPTER 3

MARRIAGE—THE ISLAMIC PERSPECTIVE

Islam is not just a religion. It is a complete way of life. It provides complete guidance in our personal as well as social life. In order to receive Allah's Blessings and Mercy, we should have proper knowledge of these obligations and should try to fulfill them. One of the social obligations of every Muslim is to establish a society based on human dignity, equality and justice. These obligations begin with the establishment of a home based on Islamic values. A healthy home with strong family ties is the nucleus of a Muslim community. Marriage thus becomes an important element in the life of a Muslim. It is the foundation of a healthy family life in Islam, and is based on the mutual cooperation, and not competition between a husband and a wife.

Islam encourage each individual to marry and establish a home. This safeguards the due rights of husband and wife, who in turn safeguard the interest of their children. A healthy home thus leads to a healthy society that safeguards the rights of each individual member of the community.

Some general guidelines for marriage have been laid down in Islamic Fiqh. Marriage constitutes a *Sunnah Muakkadah* for all normal adults. It becomes *Wajib* in case one develops an obsessive desire for a mate and may get involved in a sin without one. It is *Makrooh* for a person who has no

FAMILY LIFE AND SOCIAL OBLIGATIONS IN ISLAM

appropriate means to support a family or does not find a proper mate.

The Qur'an provides basic rules while Ahadith give the necessary guidelines for marriage. Following are a few basic rules from the Qur'an.

COMMANDMENTS IN THE QUR'AN

Marry those amongst you who are single, and the virtuous ones amongst your slaves, and maid servants ; if they are poor, Allah will enrich them out of His Grace, for Allah is of ample means and knows all things. Let those who find not the means for marriage, keep themselves chaste until Allah gives them means out of His Grace. (Noor 24:32-33)

It appears from this verse that marriage can be delayed only for two reasons ; not finding a suitable mate or not having the proper means to support a family. If these two conditions do not exist, marriage then becomes a commandment of Allah that should be obeyed and followed.

Even if one cannot marry for one reason or another, the Qur'an admonishes us to control our carnal desires and to practice the Islamic principles of piety and chastity. This is clearly mentioned in the second part of the above verse. The Qur'an further states :

Allah commands justice, kindness, and giving (their due) to near relatives, while He forbids sexual misconduct, debauchery and insolence. He instructs you, so that you may receive admonition. (Nahl 16:90)

Say, the things that my Lord has indeed forbidden are shameful deeds, whether open or secret, sins, and trespassing against truth and reason, assigning

MARRIAGE—THE ISLAMIC PERSPECTIVE

of partners to Allah for which He has given no authority, and saying things about Allah of which you have no knowledge. (A'araf 7:33)

Come not near adultery, Lo ! it is an abomination and an evil way. (Bani Israil 17:32)

The very first condition that Islam lays down for marriage is that a Believer should marry only a Believer. Marriage with a non-Believer is not allowed in Islam. The Qur'an states :

Do not marry unbelieving women until they believe ; a slave woman who believes is better than an unbelieving woman, even though she may allure you ; Nor marry (you girls) to unbelievers, until they believe ; a slave man who believes is better than an unbelieving man, even though he may allure you. (Baqarah 2:221)

Islam, however, provides an exception with respect to the People of the Book (Christians and Jews). It allows us to marry pious and chaste women even if they are not Muslims, but are from the People of the Book. It also stipulates that the motive for such a marriage should not be lust or any material gains but preservation of chastity. The Qur'an states :

(Lawful unto you in marriage) are (not only) chaste women who are Believers, but also chaste women among the people of the Book revealed before your time, if you give them their dowers, and desire chastity, not lewdness, nor secret intrigues. (Maida 5:5)

It is clear from this verse that the first criterion a person should seek in a mate is purity of character and chastity.

The Qur'an also warns us that if we wish to seek a pure and chaste mate, we should also be pure and chaste in our conduct. It states :

FAMILY LIFE AND SOCIAL OBLIGATIONS IN ISLAM

Women impure are for men impure, and men impure for women impure ; And women of purity are for men of purity, and men of purity are for women of purity (Noor 24:24)

It follows from these verses that the Islamic marriage is based on a set of common beliefs and shared values between husband and wife. These serve as the foundation and the basis of marriage. The love then keeps on growing as long the foundation exists. Hence marriage in Islam is a very stable institution. On the contrary the Western marriage is based on mere love and romantic attraction of man and woman. When the love between a man and woman reaches its climax, it serves as the foundation and basis of their marriage. The whole institution of marriage is thus based on a very subjective and emotional foundation. The facts have shown this to be a very weak basis of marriage.

Polygamy in Islam

Polygamy is allowed in Islam under certain conditions. The Qur'an, however, gives this permission subject to the condition that a man must treat his wives justly. If one fears that he cannot do so, then he should marry only one wife. The Qur'an states :

Marry, women of your choice, two or three or four ; but if you fear that you shall not be able to deal justly (with them), then only one or (a captive) that your right hand possesses ; thus it is more likely that you shall not do injustice. (Nisa 4:4)

Polygamy saves society from many evils. For those who may have extra physical desires, it allows them to have more than one wife. This saves society from such evils as rape, adultery, and all kinds of social intrigues and jealousies that often

MARRIAGE—THE ISLAMIC PERSPECTIVE

lead to various crimes. Polygamy also safeguards the rights of many women in the society. Often a wife is chronically ill and unable to perform her matrimonial obligations. Moreover, sometimes a wife cannot bear a child to a desiring husband. Polygamy permits men not to divorce such women but to have a second wife. Furthermore, often due to wars, there are more women than men, or many widows with fatherless children. Polygamy gives a chance to these women and widows to have homes for themselves and their children. Above all polygamy helps eradicate the evil of prostitution in society. It should, however, be noted that during normal conditions polygamy is neither encouraged nor recommended in Islam. Furthermore, Islam also allows a wife to dissolve her marriage if she does not want to stay as a second wife to her husband. Hence, practically speaking, polygamy is rarely practiced in a Muslim community.

Islam also enjoins that a wife and husband should have the most intimate and loving relationship. Each should cover, protect and safeguard the interests of the other partner. The Qur'an states :

They are your garments, and you are their garments.
(Baqarah 2:187)

This verse illustrates the basic concept of marriage in Islam. First, the fact that men and women are considered garments to each other, suggests that both have an equal status in sharing the responsibilities of marriage. Second, as the garment covers the body in such a way that there is nothing between the garment and body, the husband and wife should be so close and intimate to each other that there should be no secrets between them. Both should confide fully in each other and should hold no secrets in their respective lives. Third, the task of the garment is to protect the body from outside dangers. The husband and wife accordingly should protect each

FAMILY LIFE AND SOCIAL OBLIGATIONS IN ISLAM

other from all external dangers. Fourth, a garment not only covers the body but also gives it beauty and grace. Similarly, husband and wife should not only try to cover and shield each other but should do so with grace and dignity. Last, no one likes to live without clothes; hence men and women should aspire to get married and serve as garments to each other. The Qur'an also states :

And among His signs is that He created mates for you from among yourselves so that you may live in tranquility with them, and He has put love and mercy between your hearts ; Verily in that are signs for those who reflect. (Room 30:21)

It is He who created you from a single soul and from-it created its mate, that he might take rest in her..... (A'araf 7:189)

These verses further elaborate the tone and color of marriage in Islam. It is a relationship of mutual love, companionship and harmonious interaction. The wife has in her husband a person to share her love and emotions and to seek protection for herself and her family. A husband similarly seeks comfort and support from his wife in building a peaceful home and a tranquil refuge from the harshness of day to day life.

COMMANDMENTS IN AHADITH

Ahadith give us more comprehensive and detailed instructions about the Islamic approach to marriage. Following are a few basic instructions :

Recommendation for marriage

Abdullah ibn Mas'ud reported that Rasulullah s.a.w. said :

MARRIAGE—THE ISLAMIC PERSPECTIVE

O Assembly of youth ! Let those among you who have a strong biological urge, seek comfort in marriage for verily it saves the eyes from wandering astray and helps protect chastity. And whoever is not able to marry, he should observe fast (Bukhari, Muslim)

Anas ibn Malik reported that Rasulullah s.a.w. said :
Whoever wishes to meet Allah pure and purified, let him marry free women. (Ibn Majah)

Anas ibn Malik reported that Rasulullah s.a.w. said :
When a person has married, he has indeed made his religion half perfect. Then let him be careful of the remaining half. (Tirmidhi)

Desirable things in a marriage

Abu Hurairah related that Rasulullah s.a.w. said :
A woman is married for four things ; her property, her accomplishments, her beauty, and her religion. Select one having religious temperament. (Bukhari, Muslim)

Abu Hurairah reported that Rasulullah s.a.w. said :
When you are sought in marriage by one with whom you are pleased for his religion and for his character, get yourself married to him. (Tirmidhi)

Sight of bride and bridegroom before marriage

Jaber related that Rasulullah s.a.w. said :
When one of you seeks a woman in marriage let him look at whom he wishes to marry. (Abu Daud)

Mughirah ibn Shu'bah narrated : I sought a woman in marriage. Rasulullah s.a.w. asked me :

Have you seen her ?

I said : No. He then said :

FAMILY LIFE AND SOCIAL OBLIGATIONS IN ISLAM

Then look at her, because it is more proper that love should be cemented between you. (Ahmed, Ibn Majah, Nasai, Tirmidhi)

Though Islam does not allow free mixing of sexes, it does allow that man and woman should see each other before they get married. Both have an equal right to refuse marriage if one of them does not like the other person.

Consent in marriage

Abu Hurairah reported that Rasulullah s.a.w. said :

A previously married woman shall not be married till she gives her consent, nor a virgin be married till her consent is sought.

It was asked how her consent should be sought and he added :

If she remains silent, then this is her consent. (Bukhari, Muslim)

Abu Hurairah narrated that Rasulullah s.a.w. said :

A mature girl shall be asked permission about her marriage. If she is silent, it is her permission, and if she declines, there shall be no compulsion on her to marry. (Abu Daud Nasai, Tirmidhi)

Abdullah ibn Abbas related that a girl came to Rasulullah s.a.w. and reported that her father had given her in marriage to someone whom she disliked. Rasulullah s.a.w. gave her the option to marry or to decline the marriage. (Abu Daud)

One should recall that women in the pre-Islamic period were regarded like cattle and slaves and had no respect in society. This practice is still continued in many parts of the world. Islam raised the status of woman and gave her the right to marry the man of her choice, as well the right to seek

divorce (Khul'a) from the man who fails in his obligations as a husband.

Freedom of will for the woman

Abdullah ibn Abbas narrated that Boraidah (a slave girl) had some family problems and was separated from her husband. Rasulullah S.A.W. said to her: What is the harm if you go back to your husband? Boraidah asked him: Are you saying this as a commandment to me? "No," said Rasulullah S.A.W., "I am just making a recommendation." Hearing this Boraidah said: I do not need him. (Bukhari)

This incident describes two basic things. First, the Sahaba (companions of Prophet), whether male or female, were more concerned with the will of the Prophet rather than their own wishes. Boraidah did not want to go back to her husband but still asked if the Prophet ordered her to do so. Had he asked her to do so, she would have gone back to her husband. Second, men and women in Islam have equal and similar rights for making decisions about their marriage. It should be added that Boraidah was the maid servant of the Prophet. It thus follows that Islam gave this right even to a maid in society more than fourteen centuries ago. The other societies of the world gave this right to women just a few decades ago. Moreover, there are still many societies that do not give this right to women.

Witnesses for marriage

Abdullah ibn Abbas reported that Rasulullah S.A.W. said: The fornicators are those who marry by themselves without witness. (Tirmidhi)

Marriage in Islam cannot be performed in privacy. It is to be performed in public before at least two witnesses, who

FAMILY LIFE AND SOCIAL OBLIGATIONS IN ISLAM

should witness and testify the proposal of the husband and the consent of the bride to the Qadhi who performs the marriage. The Qur'an states :

And call in two witnesses from among your men, but if there are not two men, then one man and two women. (Baqarah 2:282)

According to Fuqaha, these witnesses should be adult and sane Muslims. Islam thus shuts the doors of all private intrigues and secret dealings and makes marriage a very explicit and stable institution.

Proclamation of marriage

Muhammad ibn Hatib related that Rasulullah s.a.w. said : The difference between the lawful and unlawful marriage is the proclamation and Daf (singing of songs). (Ahmed, Ibn Majah, Nasai, Tirmidhi)

The Qur'an states that chaste women are allowed in marriage provided that : *"You give them their dowers and desire chastity, not lewdness, nor secret intrigues"* (5:5). A marriage should therefore be proclaimed in public. This further protects the community from immoral and clandestine conduct and also safeguards the interests of the husband and wife.

Festivity in marriage

Aishah reported : A woman was married to a man of Ansar. Rasulullah s.a.w. said to her : Was there any amusement with her ? Verily the Ansars are pleased with amusements. (Bukhari)

Aishah narrated that Rasulullah s.a.w. said about a marriage:

Proclaim this marriage, and solemnize it in a mosque and beat Daf (a musical instrument) over it. (Tirmidhi)

MARRIAGE—THE ISLAMIC PERSPECTIVE

Abdullah ibn Abbas related that Aishah gave one of her female relatives in marriage. Rasulullah s.a.w. asked her if they had sent with her those who could sing. When they replied in the negative, he said :

It would have been better if you had sent with her those who could have sung : To you we have come ! To you we have come ! So to us welcome ! And to you welcome ! (Ibn Majah)

Islam allows every lawful amusement and play. Festivity in a marriage brings joy and happiness to the family members. At the same time it also serves as a means for the proclamation of the marriage, thereby making it more open and stable.

The marriage sermon

Abu Hurairah reported that Rasulullah s.a.w. said :
Every marriage wherein there is no Tashahhud (bearing witness to the unity of Allah and Prophethood of Muhammad s.a.w. is like a hand cut off. (Tirmidhi)

Abu Hurairah narrated that Rasulullah s.a.w. said :
Every affair of a serious nature which is not performed with praise of Allah is cut off (from Allah's blessings). (Ibn Majah)

The marriage sermon is the ritual that solemnizes the marriage in Islam. Witnesses are taken on behalf of the bride and bridegroom. They first approach the woman and tell her that she is being married to so and so for such an amount of dowry and ask if she agrees to this marriage. If she gives her consent, then they approach the bridegroom and ask him the same question. When he gives his consent, they go to the person (*Qadhi*) who is to solemnize the marriage and convey to him the consent of the bride and bridegroom. The *Qadhi* then reads the marriage sermon loudly. The sermon consists of

FAMILY LIFE AND SOCIAL OBLIGATIONS IN ISLAM

some verses form the Qur'an stating the duties and obligations of husband and wife. It also consists of praises and thanks to Allah and invocation to Prophet Muhammad s.a.w. It serves as a means of blessings for the bride and bridegroom and also as a means for the proclamation of marriage in the community.

Dowry in marriage

Uqbah ibn 'Amer reported that Rasulullah s.a.w. said :
The most equitable of the conditions of marriage is that you should fulfill that condition (dower) with which you have made your wives lawful to you. (Bukhari, Muslim)

Abdullah ibn 'Umar narrated that Rasulullah s.a.w. forbade the practice of Shigar in marriage. Shigar is a man's giving his daughter in marriage by making a condition with the father of bridegroom that the latter would give his daughter in marriage to his son, and that there should be no dower between them. (Bukhari, Muslim)

The dower is a promise of a gift or money that the husband makes to the bride at the time of marriage. It is one of the essential pre-requisites of marriage. The Qur'an states :

O Prophet ! Surely We have made lawful to you your wives whom you have given their dowers.
(Ahzab, 33:50)

The marriage is not valid unless the bride agrees to the dowry. No hard and fast rules have been laid down by the Qur'an and Hadith about the amount of dowry. In most cases the dowry is a pledge of money that the husband offers at the time of marriage and is based on the social status of the bride and bridegroom. In many societies for example, in Hindu culture, the father of the girl has to give money to a man in order to marry his daughter. Islamic laws favour the women. The man

has to offer dower money to the woman in an amount acceptable to her.

Walimah : The marriage feast

Anas ibn Malik reported that Rasulullah s.a.w. noticed a sign of yellow color on Abdul Rehman ibn Auf. He asked :

What is this ?

He replied : I have married a woman for a measure of five Dirhams of gold in dowry. Rasulullah s.a.w. then said :

Give a feast of Walimah even if it be with a single goat. (Bukhari, Muslim)

Anas ibn Malik narrated that Rasulullah s.a.w. gave a feast of Walimah when Zainab, the daughter of Jahash, was brought to his house. The people ate bread and meat to their full satisfaction. (Bukhari)

Walimah is the feast that the bridegroom offers after marriage. It is a recommended practice of the Islamic marriage and also a Sunnah of the Prophet. Walimah feast is yet another factor that adds to the festivity and the proclamation of marriage.

Recommended guidelines for Walimah

Abu Hurairah reported that Rasulullah s.a.w. said : The worst type of the Walimah feast is that where the rich are invited and the poor are left out. Whoever does not attend the feast of Walimah (without a genuine reason) disobeys Allah and His Prophet. (Bukhari, Muslim)

This Hadith teaches us two basic things ; the rich and poor both should be invited to the Walimah feast and second,

FAMILY LIFE AND SOCIAL OBLIGATIONS IN ISLAM

the one who is invited should accept the invitation and join in the festivity of marriage.

Divorce

Islam is the religion of nature. It recognizes that uncompromising differences may arise between husband and wife. It therefore gives them permission to end their marriage by divorce. Though this permission is also available in other religions and societies, the Islamic approach to divorce is very unique. It takes the most humane and natural approach to the problem. First of all, it provides numerous opportunities for husband and wife to save their marriage. Second, should divorce become unavoidable, it safeguards the interest of both parties, i.e. husband and wife.

COMMANDMENTS IN THE QUR'AN

If you dislike them (your wives), it may be that you dislike a thing while Allah has put abundant good in it. (Nisa 4:19)

Every man has some human weakness and the same is true of women. This verse reminds us that if a husband dislikes a certain weakness in his wife, he should overlook her weakness. Other related verses of the Qur'an and Ahadith pertaining to this commandment have been mentioned earlier. All of these teach us to live with our wives in love and harmony and to accept their human weaknesses. If, however, the differences between husband and wife are too great, the Qur'an commands us to approach a reconciliation by appointing mediators before taking the final action of divorce.

And if you fear a breach between the two, then appoint a judge from his people and a judge from her people ; If they both (meaning husband and

MARRIAGE—THE ISLAMIC PERSPECTIVE

wife) desire agreement, Allah will put harmony between them. (Nisa 4:65)

For resolving family disputes, Islam gives women the same rights as given to men. Both have equal rights to appoint a mediator to safeguard their rights and interests. Fuqaha add that this appointment of mediators should be done after the menstrual cycle of a woman. If differences arise while the woman is going through her cycle, both have to wait till she completes her cycle. This provides a natural cooling off period and very often, one of them realizes his or her mistake and a reconciliation takes place by itself.

In case the differences persist or the husband does not relent, the Qur'an prescribes a lengthy procedure for divorce. This is to ensure that the husband does not go through the act of divorce in a disturbed or angry state of emotions.

O Prophet ! When you divorce women, divorce them at their proper times, and count their prescribed periods, and fear Allah, your Lord. (Talaq 65:1)

It is evident from this verse that the divorce can take place only after the prescribed period. In other words, a husband has to go through a transitory period of waiting and cooling off before giving divorce to his wife. The Qur'an defines this period of waiting very clearly.

And the divorced women should keep themselves in waiting for three monthly cycles.

Such of your women who have passed the age of monthly cycles, for them the prescribed period, if you have doubts, is three months, and for those who have no courses (it is the same) ; for those who carry (life within their wombs), their period is until they deliver their burdens ; and (remember !) for

FAMILY LIFE AND SOCIAL OBLIGATIONS IN ISLAM

those who fear Allah, He will make their path easy.
(Talaq 65:4)

Furthermore, the divorce is completed only after the husband has proclaimed divorce on three separate occasions, during this waiting period. All schools of Fiqh agree that this proclamation cannot be made while the woman is passing through her monthly course. The husband has to wait for her course to be over. He can then proclaim the first divorce. Similarly he has to wait until his wife passes her second monthly course and then proclaim the second divorce. This is how Islam makes the process rather lengthy and slow and humane. Since no conjugal relations are allowed during the menstrual period, the proclamation of divorce is not allowed when a woman is passing through her monthly course. It is possible that when the woman has gone through two of her monthly courses, the husband may cool off and resume conjugal relations with her. This will automatically bring a reconciliation between them and save their marriage. The Qur'an gives this valuable opportunity of reconciliation twice.

A divorce is only permissible twice. After that, the parties should either hold together on equitable terms or separate with kindness. (Baqarah 2:229)

If the husband still does not like his wife, he may then proclaim the third divorce, which completes the process of divorce. After this, the husband can not remarry his wife. The only way he can remarry his ex-wife would be if she marries some other person, and goes through the normal process of divorce by the second husband. Such a situation is extremely rare. Islam thus makes divorce a very serious matter in life. It gives all possible opportunities to a husband to reconcile with his wife. It also gives him enough time to cool off his temper

MARRIAGE—THE ISLAMIC PERSPECTIVE

and make a rational decision. If he goes through with the final process of divorce, Islam then makes it practically impossible that he may remarry his ex-wife. This ensures the dignity of a wife. A husband should be fully aware of the significance of divorce. If he once divorces his wife, he can not ask her to comeback.

In order to further ensure the rights of women, the Qur'an also states that the proclamation of divorce is to be made before at least two witnesses.

And call two upright witnesses from among you, and give upright testimony for Allah. (Talaq 65:2)

The Qur'an also teaches us that a divorce should not end in bitterness, hatred and animosity, a thing which is now very common in the Western society. The above mentioned verse states very clearly that husbands should let their wives go with grace and kindness. This commandment is repeated in another verse.

When you divorce women, and they fulfill the term of their (waiting), either take them back on equitable terms or set them free on equitable terms. (Baqarah 2:232)

The Qur'an then goes a step further and enjoins that the husbands should not take back any of the material things that they had given to their wives. It considers such an act to be Haram (legally forbidden).

It is not lawful for you to take back any of your gifts (from your wives), except that both parties fear that they would be unable to keep the limits ordained by Allah. (Baqarah 2:229)

FAMILY LIFE AND SOCIAL OBLIGATIONS IN ISLAM

O you who believe ! You are forbidden to inherit women against their will : nor should you treat them with harshness, that you may take away part of the dower that you have given them. (Nisa 4:19)

COMMANDMENTS IN AHADITH

The commandments of Ahadith in this regard are very clear and are given below.

Abdullah ibn Umar related that Rasulullah S.A.W. said :
The most detestable of lawful things to Allah is divorce
(Abu Daud)

Mu'az ibn Jabl reported that Rasulullah S.A.W. said :
O Mu'az ! Allah created nothing on the face of the earth more pleasing to Him than the emancipation of slaves and Allah created nothing on the face of the earth more displeasing to Him than the act of divorce.
(Daraqutni)

Abdullah ibn Umar narrated that he divorced his wife during her menstruation period. His father Umar mentioned this to Rasulullah S.A.W. , who got enraged to hear it and said :

Take her back and keep her, until she becomes pure and then again becomes pure after menstruation. If he does not change his mind, let him divorce her afterwards ; let him divorce her while she is pure before he touches her. This is the period of waiting which Allah enjoins for the divorce of women. (Bukhari, Muslim)

Aishah reported that she heard Rasulullah S.A.W. saying :
There is no divorce and no emancipation by force.
(Abu Daud, Ibn Majah)

MARRIAGE—THE ISLAMIC PERSPECTIVE

Mahmood ibn Labeed narrated that Rasulullah s.a.w. was informed about a man who gave three divorces at the same time to his wife. Rasulullah s.a.w. got up enraged and said :

Are you playing with the Book of the Almighty and Glorious Allah while I am (still) amongst you ?

The narrator added that he appeared so enraged that a man got up and said : O Messenger of Allah ! shall I not kill him. (Nasai)

All that has been stated above refers mainly to the process of divorce when it is initiated by a husband. Islam gives this right to women as well. This is called *Khula'* (separation). A woman is allowed to dissolve her marriage by *Khula'* under a few specific conditions, the details of which can be seen in any book of Fiqh. When a woman seeks *Khula'* she has to forgo her right of dowry and the *Khula'* becomes effective immediately, without any period of waiting. It should be added that Islam allows a woman to seek *Khula'* when conditions are extremely unfavourable for her and she has tried her best to save the marriage. One of the Hadith says :

Thoban reported that Rasulullah s.a.w. said :

Any woman who asks her husband for divorce without a fault (a genuine reason), is deprived of even the fragrance of Paradise. (Ahmad, Tirmidhi)

The foregoing discussion gives the Islamic perspective of divorce. It provides the married couple a good opportunity for reconciliation and also protects and prevents them from making an emotional or hasty decision. First, it calls for having two mediators for bringing about a reconciliation between the spouses. Second, if this fails, it calls for the husband and wife to go through a three months period of waiting. This gives them

FAMILY LIFE AND SOCIAL OBLIGATIONS IN ISLAM

another chance of reconciliation. Third, if the husband finally decides to give divorce, it ensures the legal rights as well as the dignity of a wife. Fourth, Islam inculcates a feeling of respect and sanctity for the institution of marriage by declaring divorce an act most disliked by Allah and His Prophet. Because of these noble teachings, marriage in Islam is a very stable and strong institution and rarely ends in a divorce.

CHAPTER 4

HUSBAND AND WIFE—DUTIES AND OBLIGATIONS

Human society has mistreated and exploited women for centuries. Women were considered to be inferior to men and had no rights in the eyes of the law nor respect in society. They were treated as mere chattels or other household property. It was a common practice in Pre-Islamic Arabia that the son would inherit his father's wives like any other household commodity. His mother would then serve as his wife and his slave. In some other parts of the world, a woman was considered like an animal with no soul or life of her own. In India, for example, when a husband's body was put to fire after his death, his widow was required to jump into the burning pyre and kill herself. She did not have the privilege to have a life of her own. She could live as long as her husband was living and she had to give up her life when her husband died. This practice is still continued in some parts of India, since this is an essential part of Hindu doctrine. In some other societies, women were regarded to be a source of evil who carried the stigma of the first sin committed by Eve in Paradise.

The advent of Islam brought a revolution in the status of women. Islam raised their status on par with men. It ensured all her legal rights and also gave her freedom of choice in matters of her own life. It made her the symbol of dignity and respect in the society and safeguarded her from all forms of exploitations.

FAMILY LIFE AND SOCIAL OBLIGATIONS IN ISLAM

The Qur'an has repeatedly mentioned men and women as separate entities, reminding us that men and women are equal in terms of basic human rights. The Qur'an states :

For Muslim men and women, believing men and women, devote men and women, men and women who are patient and constant, men and women who humble themselves, men and women who give charity, men and women who fast, men and women who guard their chastity, men and women who engage much in Allah's Zikr, Allah has prepared forgiveness and great reward. (Ahzab 33:35)

The Believers, men and women, are protectors of one another. (Taubah 9:71)

Allah has promised to believers, men and women, gardens under which rivers flow. (Taubah 9:72)

In no way covet those things in which Allah has bestowed His gifts more freely on some of you than on others ; to men is allowed what they earn, and to women is allowed what they earn. (Nisa 4:32)

The Qur'an also declares that men and women come from the same stock, and reminds us that the two are equal in their mental and spiritual capacities. The Qur'an states :

O mankind ! Be careful of your duty to your Lord, who created you from a single soul and from it created its mate and from them twain has spread abroad a multitude of men and women. (Nisa 4:1)

DUTIES OF HUSBAND TOWARDS WIFE

The Qur'an has a special chapter entitled "Women" (Nisa Chapter 4) stating the mutual rights of husband and wife. Although men and women are equal partners in marriage, men

HUSBAND AND WIFE—DUTIES AND OBLIGATIONS

are required to carry a greater burden of responsibility. Men are regarded as heads of household and carry the extra responsibility of providing the basic needs to their wives and children. It is possible that this may allow some men to exploit the rights of their wives. The Qur'an and Hadith therefore give detailed and comprehensive instructions to husbands regarding their treatment of wives. These instructions far supersede those instructions given to wives with respect to their treatment of husbands. No other religion or human society has given this much protection to the rights and dignity of women. Following are just a few of these instructions.

COMMANDMENTS IN THE QUR'AN

Paying of dowry

And give the women (on marriage) their dower as a free gift. (Nisa 4:4)

Dowry is one of the essential pre-requisites of marriage. When a man proposes marriage to a woman he has to offer her a certain amount in dowry. It is very essential that the dowry should be in accordance with the own position and that of the bride in the society. The Qur'an states :

The wealthy (should give) according to his means, and the one straitened in circumstances according to his. (Baqarah 2:236)

Women have the right to accept or reject the dowry. Unless the dowry is agreed upon, the marriage is not legal. The Qur'an states :

O Prophet ! we have made lawful to you your wives whom you have given their dowries (Ahzab 33:50)

There is no blame on you to marry them when you have given them their dowries. (Mumtahinah 60:10)

FAMILY LIFE AND SOCIAL OBLIGATIONS IN ISLAM

Once the dowry is paid, it becomes the personal property of the wife. The husband is not allowed to take it back even if he divorces her. The Qur'an states :

If you decide to take one wife in place of another, even if you had given the latter a whole treasure for dower, take not the least bit of it back ; Would you take it by slander and manifest wrong ?
(Nisa 4:20)

Taking care of basic needs

Men are protectors and maintainers of women, because Allah has given the one more (strength) than the other, and because they (men) support them (women) from their means. (Nisa 4:34)

Based on this verse, the Fuqaha say that it is the duty of a husband to provide all the basic needs for his wife. If he fails to do so, he disobeys Allah. Furthermore, a wife is not required to be the earning member of a Muslim family. She, however, is allowed to work with her husband's permission. The money she earns is her own and her husband has no legal right over her money.

Equal rights of women

They (your wives) are garments for you, and you are garments for them. (Baqarah 2:187)

And they have rights similar to those against them in a like manner. (Baqarah 2:228)

It should, however, be added that there is a basic difference in the Islamic concept of equality of men and women as opposed to the Western concept of the equality of the two. Islam gives them the same basic human rights, but not the

HUSBAND AND WIFE—DUTIES AND OBLIGATIONS

same basic responsibilities. A Western woman has to work in the kitchen, feed the newborn, raise the children and simultaneously help her husband in making the family livelihood. She is also obliged to bear arms and defend the country. Islam rejects this concept of equality of responsibility of men and women. It recognizes that women differ from men in their physical and physiological constitution and have their specific biological entity. Furthermore, they also differ from men in their emotional needs and mental aptitudes. Accordingly, Islam assigns two different sets of responsibilities to men and women. Men in the Muslim community are the heads of households. Their primary duty is to earn the livelihood for their families. Women on the other hand are entrusted with the responsibility of managing the homes. Their primary duty is to raise the children. Men thus carry a higher burden of responsibility. This has been made very clear in the Qur'an :

Women have rights similar to the rights against them, according to what is equitable ; but men have a degree (of advantage) over them, and Allah is Exalted in Power, Wise (Baqarah 2:228)

And in no way covet those things in which Allah has bestowed His gifts more freely on some of you than on others ; to men is allotted what they earn, and to women what they earn ; but ask Allah of His bounty ; for Allah has full knowledge of all things. (Nisa 4:32)

Kindness to wife

Live with them on a basis of kindness and equity, If you take a dislike to them (for any reason), it may be that you dislike a thing, and Allah brings about through it a great deal of good (for you). (Nisa 4:19)

FAMILY LIFE AND SOCIAL OBLIGATIONS IN ISLAM

It is impossible to find a woman who is perfect in every aspect of her life. A person may thus begin to dislike his wife for one reason or another. In such cases, the Qur'an commands the husband to overlook her weaknesses and to treat her with kindness and compassion. The Qur'an also gives the glad tidings that Allah may bring a great deal of good to the husband through this act.

Forgiveness of wife

O you who Believe ! Some of your spouses and children may be your own enemies, so beware of them ! Yet if you forgive and overlook and cover up (their faults), Allah is (likewise) Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful. (Taghabun 64:14)

In some cases the demands of wife and children may conflict with the commandments of Allah. Such family members are our enemies. The Qur'an commands that we should not only forgive such family members, but should also cover their faults and weaknesses. Exposing their faults and weaknesses will lead to their humiliation and this is strictly forbidden in Islam.

Sanctity of wife's honour

As for those who slander virtuous, believing women (who are) innocent, cursed are they in the world and the Hereafter. For them is a grievous penalty. (Noor 24:23)

And if any of your women are guilty of lewdness, take the evidence of four (reliable) witnesses from amongst you against them. (Nisa 4:15)

Islamic law normally requires the evidence of two witnesses of a crime for the culprit to be punished. The

HUSBAND AND WIFE—DUTIES AND OBLIGATIONS

honour, and integrity of woman in Islam is so sacred, that the Islamic law requires the evidence of four witnesses against her, otherwise she is regarded as a pure and chaste woman.

Equal rights for arbitration

If a wife fears cruelty or desertion on her husband's part, there is no blame on them if they arrange an amicable settlement between themselves; and such settlement is the best. (Nisa 4:128)

Kindness even to a divorced wife

When you divorce women, and they fulfill their term (of waiting), do not prevent them from marrying their (future) husbands, if they mutually agree on equitable terms; this instruction is for all amongst you who believe in Allah and the Last Day. (Baqarah 2:232)

These are just a few basic Qur'anic injunctions that depict the respect and regard Islam gives to women. No other religion or human society in the world comes even close to these noble teachings.

COMMANDMENTS IN AHADITH

Ahadith provide us the necessary details of the Qur'anic injunctions. They also speak of the reward associated with good conduct and motivate men to be kind and compassionate to their wives.

The best treasure of man

Ibn Abbas reported that Rasulullah S.A.W. said :
Shall I not inform you about the best treasure which a man should hoard? It is a virtuous wife who pleases

FAMILY LIFE AND SOCIAL OBLIGATIONS IN ISLAM

him whenever he looks at her, and who obeys him when he orders her, and who guards herself when he is absent from her. (Abu Daud)

Thoban narrated that someone asked Rasulullah s.a.w. : What is the best commodity that a man could acquire? He answered :

The best commodity is a tongue engaged in the remembrance (Zikr) of Allah, a grateful heart, and a believing wife who helps him in his faith. (Ahmed, Ibn Majah, Tirmidhi)

Abdullah ibn Amr related that Rasulullah s.a.w. said : The world, all of it, is a commodity, and the best commodity of the world is a virtuous wife. (Muslim)

Abdullah ibn Abbas reported that Rasulullah s.a.w. said : There are four things, and whoever has been gifted with them, has been gifted with the best things of this world and the next : A grateful heart, a remembering tongue, a body patient in disasters and a wife who is not treacherous regarding herself and his property. (Baihaqi)

One of the best treasures of a Believer according to these Ahadith is a virtuous wife. Islam thus not only raises the position of women but regards them as valuable treasures. If a person is blessed with a virtuous wife, he should then cherish and protect her as a valuable treasure.

Kind treatment

Abu Hurairah related that Rasulullah s.a.w. said : Treat women kindly. Woman has been created from a rib and the most crooked part of the rib is the uppermost. If you try to straighten it, you will break it and if you leave alone, it will remain crooked. So give

HUSBAND AND WIFE—DUTIES AND OBLIGATIONS

sermons (and advice) to women (accordingly).
(Bukhari, Muslim)

Abu Hurairah reported that Rasulullah s.a.w. said :
Certainly the woman was created from a rib which will never be straight for you, so enjoy her in spite of her crookedness. If you go to make her straight, you will break her and her breaking is her divorce. (Muslim)

Women are different from men in their likes and dislikes and also in their temperaments. A believing husband should take benefit from his wife in spite of all adverse differences. He should overlook her weaknesses and enjoy her good company. The Hadith states very clearly that a husband should not put too much pressure on his wife to change her personality and warns him that if he would do so, he may break up his marriage. The Hadith goes one step further and instructs the husband to guide his wife with proper counsel and help her in discharging her family responsibilities.

Prohibition of dislike for the wife

Abu Hurairah related that Rasulullah s.a.w. said :
Let no man entertain any rancor against a Muslim woman. Should he dislike one quality in her, he would find another which is pleasing to him. (Muslim)

Women's rights and obligations

Amr ibn Ahwas Jashmi related that he heard Rasulullah s.a.w. saying in his address of the Farewell Pilgrimage :
Treat your women kindly, they are like prisoners in your homes. Should they be guilty of indecency, you may leave them alone in their beds and may also administer slight chastisement. If they obey you, then do not have recourse to anything else against them. You have your

FAMILY LIFE AND SOCIAL OBLIGATIONS IN ISLAM

rights concerning your wives and they have their rights concerning you. Your right is that they shall not permit anyone you dislike to enter your home and their right is that you should treat them well in the matter of food and clothing. (Tirmidhi)

Jaber ibn Abdullah reported that Rasulullah s.a.w. said : Fear Allah regarding your women. Verily you have married them with the trust of Allah and made their bodies lawful with the word of Allah. You have a right over them that they entertain nobody to your beds. If they do so, give them a beating without causing injury. They have rights over you in respect of their food and clothing according to your means. (Bukhari, Muslim)

Basic rights of women

Mu'awiah ibn Haidah reported : I asked Rasulullah s.a.w. : What is the right of a wife over her husband ? He said :

Feed her as you feed yourself, clothe her as you clothe yourself, do not strike on her face, do not rebuke her and do not separate yourself from her except inside the house. (Abu Daud, Ahmed, Ibn Majah)

The ideal husband

Abu Hurairah related that Rasulullah s.a.w. said : The most perfect of Believers, in the matter of faith, are those whose behavior is best ; and the best of you are those who behave best towards their wives. (Tirmidhi)

Aishah reported that Rasulullah s.a.w. said : The best of you is he who is best to his family, and I am the best among you to my family. (Ibn Majah, Tirmidhi)

HUSBAND AND WIFE—DUTIES AND OBLIGATIONS.

Equal treatment with different wives

Abu Hurairah narrated that Rasulullah s.a.w. said :

When a man has two wives and he does not deal equitably between them, he will come on the Resurrection Day with one side of his body hanging down. (Abu Daud, Nasai, Tirmidhi)

Reward for spending on family

Abu Mas'ud reported that Rasulullah s.a.w. said :

Whenever a Muslim spends something for his family hoping for a reward from Allah, it is regarded as an act of charity on his part. (Bukhari, Muslim)

Thoban related that Rasulullah s.a.w. said :

The best Dinar a man spends is a Dinar he spends for his family, and a dinar he spends for his animals in the cause of Allah, and a Dinar he spends on his friends for the pleasure of Allah. (Muslim)

Sa'ad ibn Abi Waqqas related that Rasulullah s.a.w. said :

Whatever you might spend seeking thereby the pleasure of Allah, will have its reward, even that which you put in the mouth of your wife. (Bukhari, Muslim)

These Ahadith motivate and inspire men to treat their wives not only with kindness and compassion but with generosity. Islam is the only religion that gives such a distinguished position to women.

Admonition for not spending on family

Abdullah ibn Amr ibn 'As reported that Rasulullah s.a.w. said :

FAMILY LIFE AND SOCIAL OBLIGATIONS IN ISLAM

It is enough sin for a person to hold back the dues of one whose means of living he controls. (Abu Daud, Muslim)

The conduct of Rasulallah S.A.W.

Whatever Rasulallah S.A.W. said about the rights and obligations of wives, he practiced it himself with his wives. He was the most ideal husband. Following are a few examples of his love and care for his wives.

Aishah reported that she accompanied Rasulallah S.A.W. on a journey. She raced with him on foot and beat him. Later when she had gained some weight, she raced him again, and he beat her. He then told her: This makes up for the first race. (Abu Daud)

Aishah reported: By Allah I saw Rasulallah S.A.W. standing at the door of my room, while the Abyssinians were playing with spears in the mosque. He covered me with his sheet so that I could see the sport. He kept standing at the door for my sake till I was the one who departed. (Bukhari, Muslim)

Aishah reported: I was playing with dolls with several of my friends. When Rasulallah S.A.W. came they withdrew from me. He then sent them back to me and they started playing again with me. (Bukhari, Muslim)

Aishah narrated that once Rasulallah S.A.W. came back from a battle and saw her playing with dolls. She also had a horse with two wings. When he saw it he asked me: What is the thing over it? I said: Two wings. He exclaimed: A horse with two wings! I said: Have you not heard that Solomon had a horse with wings? Hearing this he laughed so heartily that I could see even his back teeth. (Abu Daud)

HUSBAND AND WIFE—DUTIES AND OBLIGATIONS

We should realize that the Prophet was not only a Messenger of Allah, but also the head of the Islamic State in Madina. He had a very busy life and also devoted much of his time in prayers. Yet, he took time out to spend with his wives, enjoyed their company and participated in amusements as well. We should also follow his practice in our family life. The Qur'an also states : *You have indeed in the Messenger of Allah a beautiful pattern (of conduct to be followed)* (33:21)

DUTIES OF WIFE TOWARDS HUSBAND

The Ideal Wife

Abu Omamah related that Rasulullah s.a.w. said :
Next to fear of Allah, the believer finds nothing better than a virtuous wife. If he bids her, she obeys him ; if he looks at her, she pleases him ; if he takes a promise from her, she fulfills it ; and if he is absent, she guards her conduct and his property. (Ibn Majah)

Abu Hurairah narrated that Rasulullah s.a.w. was asked :
Who amongst women is the best ? He replied :
She who gives pleasure to her husband when he looks at her, obeys him when he bids her, and does not betray him regarding herself and his wealth fearing his displeasure. (Nasai)

Utmost respect for husband

Abu Hurairah reported that Rasulullah s.a.w. said :
If I were to order anybody to make prostration to anybody, I would have ordered women to prostrate before their husbands. (Tirmidhi)

Qais ibn Sa'ad reported : I went to Hira and found them (Hirites) prostrating before their leaders. I thought :

FAMILY LIFE AND SOCIAL OBLIGATIONS IN ISLAM

The Messenger of Allah has greater right to be prostrated to. So I came to him and said : I saw Hirites prostrating before their leader, but you are more deserving that prostration should be made before you. he said to me : Tell me, if you pass by my grave, will you prostrate before it ? I replied in the negative. Rasulullah s.a.w. then said :

Do not prostrate before me. Had I ordered anybody to prostrate before anyone, I would have ordered women to prostrate before their husbands. This is because of the duties ordained by Allah upon wives towards husbands. (Abu Daud, Ahmed)

Need of husband's permission for fasting

Abu Sa'eed Khudri related that Rasulullah s.a.w. said : No women shall observe fast except with the permission of her husband. (Abu Daud, Ibn Majah)

The commentators of Hadith state that this refers to only voluntary fasting. No husband is allowed to commands his wife against a commandment of Allah ; if he does so, the wife is not required to obey him.

Response to the call of husband

Abu Hurairah related that Rasulullah s.a.w. said : Whenever a man calls his wife to bed and she refuses it, and he passes the night in an angry mood, the angles curse her the whole night. (Bukhari, Muslim)

Talaq ibn Ali narrated that Rasulullah s.a.w. said : When a man calls his wife to satisfy his desire, let her come to him even though she is occupied at the oven. (Tirmidhi)

HUSBAND AND WIFE—DUTIES AND OBLIGATIONS

Admonition for refusing husband's call

Abu Hurairah reported that Rasulullah s.a.w. said :

By Him in whose hands is my life, when a man calls his wife to his bed, and she turns away from him, He who is in the Heaven is displeased with her until her husband is pleased with her. (Bukhari, Muslim)

“He who is in Heaven” refers to Almighty Allah. One of the most important duties of a wife towards her husband is to satisfy his physical desires. As stated in an earlier Hadith, these rights have been ordained by Allah. Thus when a wife refuses to respond to the physical need of her husband, she disobeys Allah, thereby earn His displeasure.

Reward for the proper care of husband's money

Abu Hurairah reported that Rasulullah s.a.w. said :

When a woman spends (in charity) out of the earnings of her husband even without his permission, there is half of her husband's reward for her as well. (Bukhari, Muslim)

Aishah related that Rasulullah s.a.w. said :

When a wife spends from the food of her house without spoiling it, there is reward for her for what she gives away. There is also reward for her husband for what he earns, neither of them diminishing anything from the reward of the other. (Bukhari, Muslim)

Since a man is the only earning member in a Muslim family, the money that the wife gives in charity is that which is earned by her husband. Hence both receive equal reward for this charity.

FAMILY LIFE AND SOCIAL OBLIGATIONS IN ISLAM

Admonition for giving trouble to husband

Mu'az ibn Jabel related that Rasulullah s.a.w. said :

A women does not give trouble to her husband in this world, but his wife of the pure eyed virgins from Paradise says to her : Do not give him trouble. May Allah destroy you ! He is only a passing guest with you and it is very near that he will soon leave you and come to us. (Ibn Majah, Tirmidhi)

Rejection of prayers of disobedient wives

Abu Umamah reported that Rasulullah s.a.w. said :

There are three whose prayers and supplications are not accepted : a fugitive slave until he returns, a woman who passes the night while her husband is displeased with her, and a leader who is disliked by his people. (Tirmidhi)

This Hadith is another reminder to wives to be obedient to their husbands and to avoid those things that may displease them. Their prayers and supplications may be not accepted if they deliberately cause displeasure to their husbands. If a person is angry with the wife without a genuine reason, then she is not at fault and her prayers and supplications will not be rejected by Allah.

Reward for pleasing husband

Umme Salmah reported that Rasulullah s.a.w. said :

A wife who dies while her husband is pleased with her, will enter Paradise. (Tirmidhi)

A Believing husband will be pleased with the wife only when she obeys all the commandments of Allah and lives a virtuous life.

HUSBAND AND WIFE—DUTIES AND OBLIGATIONS

Anas ibn Malik narrated that Rasulullah S.A.W. said :

When a woman offers her five daily prayers, fasts during Ramdhan, guards her chastity, and obeys her husband, she may enter Paradise by whichever door she likes. (Abu-Noaim in Hilya)

All that has been stated above deals mainly with the material and physical obligations of the spouses. Islam regards the spiritual needs of a person more important than his material needs. A true Believer is primarily concerned with seeking the pleasure of Allah by obeying His commandments. Material gains and physical comforts of this world occupy a secondary position in his life. The Qur'an states :

If any do wish for the transitory things (of this life), We readily grant them, such things as We will, to such persons as We desire. In the end have We prepared Hell for them, they will burn therein, disgraced and rejected. Those who do wish for the (things of) Hereafter, and strive for it with all due striving, and have Faith in Allah, they are the ones whose striving is acceptable (to Allah). (Bani Israil 17:18-19)

The ultimate success of a true Believer lies in leading a righteous life that should save him from Hell and lead him to Paradise. The Qur'an further states :

Only he who is saved from the Fire (of Hell) and admitted to the Gardens (of Paradise) will have attained the object (of his life), for the life of this world is but goods and chattels of deception. (Al-e-Imran 3:185)

The Qur'an also states :

O you who believe ! Save yourself and your families from a Fire, whose fuel is men and stones. (Tahreem 66:6)

FAMILY LIFE AND SOCIAL OBLIGATIONS IN ISLAM

It thus follows that the cardinal obligation of a husband and his wife is to help each other in leading a life that should ensure them the pleasure of Allah in the world Hereafter. If a husband provides the best of material things to his wife, who in turn gives her utmost love and obedience, but both do not help in saving each other from the punishment of Allah, then both fail in their obligations to each other. The following Hadith brings this point more clearly.

Each one of you is like a shepherd and would be questioned about those given under his care. The leader is responsible for the community. The husband is responsible for his family and the wife is responsible for her husband's home and children. (Bukhari, Muslim)

The Hadith illustrates the importance of family obligations in Islam. First, the husband and wife are equal in their family responsibilities. Second, both will be questioned separately on the Day of Judgement if they fulfilled their respective responsibilities. Third, the Hadith makes a special reference to the responsibility of a mother regarding her children. This is because of the fact that children stay close to mothers. Needless to say that cardinal responsibility of a husband towards his wife and that of a wife towards her husband and children is to help one another in living a righteous life. The following Ahadith bring forth this point more vividly.

May Allah bless that husband who wakes up from his sleep at night and prays *Tahajjud* Salat. He then also awakens up his wife from her sleep so that she may also pray *Tahajjud*. If she does not wake up, he then sprinkles water on her face. May Allah also bless that wife, who wakes up at night and prays *Tahajjud* Salat. She then also awakens up her husband so that he may also pray *Tahajjud*. If he does not wake up, she then sprinkles water on his face. (Nasai)

HUSBAND AND WIFE—DUTIES AND OBLIGATIONS

When a man awakens his wife at night and both pray two Rakats of Salat in congregation, they are enrolled among those males and females who remember Allah. (Abu Daud, Ibn Majah)

It is evident from this discussion that marriage in Islam is not based just on physical attraction of two sexes or the material obligations of the spouses. It calls, rather for a total commitment of the spouses to share and meet the physical, material as well as the spiritual needs of the partner. Hence the Islamic marriage is a very sacred and sound institution. It is for this reason that a broken home, a single mother or a single parent family is a phenomenon rarely seen in a Muslim community.

CHAPTER 5

RELATIVES—RIGHTS AND OBLIGATIONS

The family institution in Islam is not comprised merely of one's immediate family members. It includes, in addition to parents, husband, wife, children and other close relatives as well. Islam encompasses all relatives by blood or marriage within a broad concept of family and defines their respective rights and obligations. A Muslim is required to honour these rights as a commandment from Allah and His Prophet. If one fails to do so, he is guilty of a sin that will not be forgiven on the Day of Judgement, unless the person concerned forgives him. The Qur'an has repeatedly stated the importance of family obligations and their rights. Following are a few basic commandments.

COMMANDMENTS IN THE QUR'AN

Importance of family ties

He causes many to (go) astray and many He leads into the right path ; but He causes not to (go) astray except those who transgress ; those who break Allah's covenant after it is ratified and sever (the relations) which Allah has ordered to be joined ; and so do mischief on the earth ; those are the losers. (Baqarah 2:26-27)

FAMILY LIFE AND SOCIAL OBLIGATIONS IN ISLAM

The right guidance in life comes only through the blessings of Allah. Moreover, Allah gives this guidance to those who seek for it sincerely, and not to those who transgress His set limits. Joining of family ties is a commandment of Allah. The Qur'an states that those who sever these ties, transgress Allah's limits and are therefore deprived of receiving Allah's guidance. Thus maintaining family ties is one of the pre-requisites for receiving Allah's guidance in life. Those who are guilty of severing family ties, deprive themselves of receiving Allah's guidance. It is for this reason that the verse states : *those are the losers.*

Rights of the relatives

Allah commands Justice, Ehsan and giving (their due) to near relatives. (Nahl 16:90)

The practice of justice and *Ehsan* in Islam is as important a duty as praying Salat or observing Siyam. This is because of the fact that Islam is a Deen and provides guidance in one's social as well as personal life. It is evident from the above verse that the practice of justice and *Ehsan* should start with the near relatives. The importance of this commandment is evidenced by the fact that this verse has been incorporated as the last part of Friday sermon and is recited in each and every mosque throughout the Muslim Ummah. Every Muslim is thus reminded every Friday to remember his duties towards his relatives and to treat them with kindness and *Ehsan*.

Serve Allah, and join not any partners with Him ; and do Ehsan with parents, kinsfolk, orphans, those in need, neighbours who are near, neighbours who are strangers, the companions by your side, the wayfarer (you meet), and what your right hands possess. (Nisa 4:36)

RELATIVES—RIGHTS AND OBLIGATIONS

The essence of Islam is not only to serve Allah, but also to serve our fellow human beings. It also calls for achieving a level of *Ehsan*, i.e. excellence in our attitude and practice. This is a wider and more comprehensive concept than the Western concept of: "Love God and love your neighbour". The above verse commands us to do *Ehsan* not only with parents but with all persons whom we come across in our lives. Furthermore, the verse also shows that doing *Ehsan* with relatives is a duty next to that of parents and supersedes the rest of our social obligations.

And give to the relatives their due rights, as well as to those in want, and to the wayfarer, but waste not (your wealth) in the manner of a spendthrift.
(Bani Israel 17:26)

The verse makes it clear that helping a relative, a needy person or a traveler is not just an act of charity but a commandment of Allah. Each member of Muslim community has certain rights upon us and we have to honour these rights. It should be noted that this commandment starts with the rights of relatives.

So give what is due to relatives, the needy, and the wayfarer; That is best for those who seek the favour of Allah, and it is they who will prosper.
(Rûm 30:38)

The verse states clearly that those who desire the pleasure of Allah should fulfill their social obligations, especially those concerning the relatives. The verse further states that only those who fulfil these obligations shall prosper in life. It thus follows that no matter how righteous a person is in his personal life, he cannot receive the good pleasure of Allah unless he also fulfills his family and social obligations.

Spending on relatives

They ask you : What they should spend (in charity). Say : Whatever you spend that is good, is for parents and relatives and orphans and those in want and for wayfarers ; And whatever you do that is good, Allah knows it well. (Baqarah 2:215)

Islam is the Deen of nature. It sets the human rights according to their respective needs and positions. The parents in this hierarchy of rights occupy the first position. Next to them comes the position of the nearest relatives. This is then followed by the other social obligations towards the community.

Admonition to the rich in the community

Let not those among you who are endowed with grace and amplitude of means resolve by oath against helping their relatives, those in want, and those who have left homes in Allah's cause ; Let them forgive and overlook ; Do you not wish that Allah should forgive you ? For Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful. (Noor 24:22)

Each family has a few persons who bear some personal dislikes or disputes with a few other members. The Qur'an commands that these differences should not stop a person from meeting his family obligations and that the rich in the family should always help the poor members of family. the Qur'an then reminds us that each one of us wishes for Allah's forgiveness. Hence, we should also practice forgiveness in our mutual dealings. It is not appropriate to wish forgiveness from Allah unless we follow a similar attitude.

Kindness to relatives

And if you have to avoid them, seeking some mercy which you may expect from your Lord, yet speak to them a word of kindness. (Bani Israil 17:28)

One may avoid a poor relative for two reasons. First, one may not have the means to meet his needs. Second, a relative can demand far more than what he can afford. In both these cases, the Qur'an commands us to be considerate to our relatives and to speak to them with kind words.

The cardinal principle of family help

Kind words and covering of fault are better than charity followed by injury. (Baqarah 2:263)

If a person helps another person by charity and then hurts his feelings by reminding him of his favours, this is against the basic spirit of Islam. The Qur'an states very clearly that speaking kindly and covering other's weaknesses is better than helping a person and then hurting his feelings.

A Criterion of righteousness

It is not righteousness that you turn your faces towards East or West ; but it is righteousness to believe in Allah, and the Last Day, and the angles, and the Books, and the Messengers ; and to spend of your substance, out of love for Allah, for your relatives, for orphans, for the needy, for the wayfarer, for those who ask, and for the ransom of slaves ; to be steadfast in prayer, and to practice regular charity ; to fulfill the contracts which you have made ; and to be firm and patient in pain and adversity, and throughout all periods of panic ; Such

FAMILY LIFE AND SOCIAL OBLIGATIONS IN ISLAM

are the people of truth, the God-fearing.
(Baqarah 2:177)

This verse gives the most comprehensive criterion of righteousness in Islam and also describes them in the sequence of their relative importance. It should be noted that next to having the proper Eman (faith), the most important criterion of righteousness is to spend on family members and other needy persons of society. The criterion of observing Salat and other virtues comes next to that of spending on family members.

Will of inheritance

It is prescribed, when death approaches any of you, if he leave any goods, that he make a bequest to parents and next of kin, in a proper manner, this is due from the God-fearing. (Baqarah 2:180)

Islam has clearly defined the respective share of various family members in the inherited property of a person. This verse reminds us to follow the limits set by Allah and to give the due share of our property to our family members.

Regarding relatives not covered under the will

But if at the time of division, other relatives, or orphans or poor, are present, feed them out of the (property), and speak to them words of kindness and justice. (Nisa 4:8)

If there be a distribution of property and a few persons do not receive a share from it, they may feel deprived or grieved. This verse commands us to make them happy by feeding them and by speaking to them words of kindness and justice.

COMMANDMENTS IN AHADITH

Ahadith give us a more comprehensive account of the importance of family obligations in Islam. Following are a few related Ahadith.

Prophet's first sermon in Madina

Abdullah ibn Salam reported : When Rasulullah S.A.W. came to Madina, I approached him. When I examined his face, I could recognize that he surely did not have the face of a liar. The first thing which he uttered was : O people ! Spread (the greeting of) Assalamu-Alaikum, give food (to the poor), maintain the blood ties, pray at night when people are asleep ; you will then enter Paradise with ease. (Tirmidhi)

Abdullah ibn Salam was the most learned Jewish scholar in Madina. Later he became a Muslim and then narrated this Hadith. It should be noted that the Prophet entered Madina as the head of a well organized Muslim community, which later grew into a very powerful state. The above sermon of the Prophet could thus be regarded as the inaugural speech of a president of a country. One should also note that the sermon was very short, yet carried a comprehensive message. He gave only four commandments ; three of which refer to the family and social obligations and only one refers to prayers. The Hadith thus reiterates the importance of family and social obligations in Islam.

Criterion of upholding family ties

Abdullah ibn 'Umar narrated that Rasulullah S.A.W. said : One who reciprocates in doing good is not the one who upholds the ties of kinship. It is the one who upholds them when the other party severs them. (Bukhari)

Importance of upholding family ties

Abu Hurairah reported that Rasulullah s.a.w. said :
The word *Rahm* is derived from the word *Rahman* (one of the names of Allah) ; So Almighty Allah says :
Whoever keeps connection with *Rahm*, I will keep connection with him ; And whoever cuts it, I will cut his connection with Me. (Bukhari)

The Arabic term for upholding family ties is *Silat al Rahm*, which means joining of related to uterus.

Aishah narrated that Rasulullah s.a.w. said :
Rahm (Blood ties) is suspended with the Throne (of Allah) and says : Whoever joins me, Allah will join him ; and whoever severs me, Allah will sever connection with him. (Bukhari, Muslim)

Abdul Rehman ibn Auf reported that Rasulullah s.a.w. said :

The Blessed and Almighty Allah says : I am Allah and I am Merciful ; I created blood ties and derived its name from my name ; I shall keep connection with him who joins it, and I shall destroy one who cuts it off. (Abu Daud)

Durra bint Abi Lahab related that Rasulullah s.a.w. was asked : Who among men is the best ? He answered : One who is most dutiful to Allah and most dutiful towards blood connections. (Ahmad, Tabrani)

Abu Hurairah narrated that Rasulullah s.a.w. said :
He who believes in Allah and the Last Day should join the ties of kinship and he who believes in Allah and the Last Day should speak beneficently or keep quiet. (Muslim)

RELATIVES—RIGHTS AND OBLIGATIONS

Abu Sufyan relates that in the course of meeting with Heracles, the latter asked him: What does Rasulullah s.a.w. teach you? I answered him:

He tells us to worship Allah, the one, and not to associate anything with Him, to discard what our ancestors said, and to perform the daily Salat, to tell the truth, keep chaste, and exercise benevolence towards kindred. (Bukhari, Muslim)

History tells us that the Prophet sent a letter to Heracles, the Roman emperor, inviting him to Islam. The emperor enquired from his companions in the court if there was any Arab who could tell him something about the Prophet. Abu Sufyan at that time was an unbeliever and present in Syria. Heracles called Abu Sufyan to his court and asked him to describe the teachings of the Prophet. The above Hadith was narrated by Abu Sufyan after he accepted Islam. One should note the comprehensiveness of Islamic teachings that involve not only faith and prayers but social obligations as well.

Blessings for upholding family ties

Anas ibn Malik reported that Rasulullah s.a.w. said: Whoever desires that provisions (for life) might be extended to him and that his time of life be prolonged, let him keep affinity with his relatives. (Bukhari, Muslim)

The commentators of Hadith state that the Hadith does not refer to prolonging one's life in terms of physical age. It rather means that such a person will receive Allah's blessings that will enable him to do much good deeds in his life. Furthermore, increase in provision also does not mean increase by weight or number. It refers to increase in Allah's blessings that will save the provisions from waste and make them last longer.

FAMILY LIFE AND SOCIAL OBLIGATIONS IN ISLAM

Abu Hurairah reported that a man said : O Messenger of Allah ! I have some relatives, with whom I live in amity, while they treat me badly. I do them good, while they do me evil ; I am gentle to them, while they are rough to me. Rasulullah s.a.w. said :

If you are as you say, it is then as though you give them hot ashes, and as long as you continue as you are, you will always have a helper from Allah against them. (Muslim)

The Hadith teaches us to be benevolent to our relatives regardless of their attitude towards us and that as long as we shall practice this, Allah's help will be with us.

Abu Ayub Khalid ibn Zaid Ansari related that a man asked : O Messenger of Allah ! tell me that which will cause me to be admitted to Paradise and will keep me away from the Fire of Hell. Rasulullah s.a.w. answered : Worship Allah and do not associate anything with Him ; observe Salat, pay Zakat and uphold the ties of kinship. (Bukhari, Muslim)

It is clear from this Hadith that prayers alone will not help us enter Paradise. We also have to uphold the ties of kinship and try our best to be benevolent towards them. We can then justly hope to enter Paradise.

Spending on relatives

Abu Hurairah narrated that Rasulullah s.a.w. was asked :

Which charity is the best ? He answered :

The charity to the needy, and begin it with one who is related to you. (Abu Daud)

Solaiman ibn Am'er reported that Rasulullah s.a.w. said :

RELATIVES—RIGHTS AND OBLIGATIONS

Charity to a poor man has one merit of reward, and to a relative has two merits of rewards one for charity and the other for upholding family relations. (Ahmad, Ibn Majah, Nasai, Tirmidhi)

Jaber ibn Samorah related that Rasulullah S.A.W. said : When Allah gives wealth to any of you, let him begin with spending on himself and then the members of his household. (Muslim)

Punishment for breaking family ties

Jubair ibn Mut'em reported that Rasulullah S.A.W. said : One who severs blood ties shall not enter Paradise. (Bukhari, Muslim)

The commentators of the Qur'an and Hadith agree that all the Believers will ultimately enter Paradise. These will be divided into two classes. There will be some who will enter Paradise with complete forgiveness and the Fire of Hell will not even touch them. There will be others who will first go to Hell and suffer for their sins and then enter Paradise. The above Hadith means that Allah will not forgive the sin of breaking family ties. Those who break the family ties will first go to Hell for their sins and then enter Paradise.

Abu Barkah reported that Rasulullah S.A.W. said : There is no other sin for the doer of which Allah hastens punishment in this world along with what is in store for him in the next world than severance of blood ties. (Abu Daud, Tirmidhi)

The right of elder brother

Sa'id ibn al 'As narrated that Rasulullah S.A.W. said :

FAMILY LIFE AND SOCIAL OBLIGATIONS IN ISLAM

The right of elder brother upon the younger is (like) the right of the father upon his son. (Baihaqi)

Regard for the young and old in the family

Amr ibn Sho'aib relates on the authority of his father, who heard it from his father that Rasulullah S.A.W. said :

He who is not kind to our younger ones and does not respect our older ones, is not one of us.

(Abu Daud, Tirmidhi)

This Hadith does not mean that one who is guilty of the above acts does not belong to the Muslim community. It means that he does not have the proper attributes of a Muslim. Thus he is not a befitting member of a Muslim community.

CHAPTER 6

BELIEVERS' MUTUAL OBLIGATIONS

The entire Muslim Ummah is one big family cemented together by the common bonds of belief in one Allah and His Last Prophet. It is one homogenous body with no distinctions in color, race or nationality. Islam recognizes that all Believers, men and women, are equal in the sight of Allah. The only distinction recognized by Islam relates to one's piety and righteousness. The Qur'an states :

The most respected of you in the sight of Allah is the most righteous amongst you. (Hujrat 49:13)

The Prophet in his Farewell address also declared : Neither is a white superior to a black nor an Arab superior to a non-Arab, and all Muslims are brothers to one another. This brotherhood is so cohesive and strong that the entire Muslim Ummah is like one body. Whenever a certain individual or a part of the community is in distress, the whole community reacts and responds to its needs.

Islam gives clear injunctions that safeguard the due rights of each Believer. It also provides a comprehensive code of moral values and ethics that promote a feeling of love and unity among all Believers. At the same time, it gives stern warning to those who break these codes and offers glad tidings to those who honour these codes. This raises the position of Islamic moral teachings from the level of mere religious guidance to that

FAMILY LIFE AND SOCIAL OBLIGATIONS IN ISLAM

of legal injunctions. Islam thus ensures the individual and the collective rights of all members of its community.

COMMANDMENTS IN THE QUR'AN

Unity of Muslim Ummah

Verily, this Brotherhood of yours is a single Brotherhood, and I am your Lord and Cherisher ; therefore serve Me (and no other). (Anbia 21:92)

All Believers are brothers

The Believers are but a single brotherhood. (Hujrat 49:10)

Believers are compassionate to one another

Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah, and those who are with him are strong against unbelievers, (but) compassionate towards one another. (Fatah 48:29)

Believers are protectors to one another

The Believers, men and women, are protectors, one of another. (Taubah 9:71)

Believers' social obligations

O you who believe ! Let not some men among you laugh at others ; It may be that the (latter) are better than the (former) ; Nor let some women laugh at others ; It may be that the (latter) are better than the (former) ; Nor defame, nor be sarcastic to one another, nor call each other by (offending)

MUTUAL OBLIGATIONS OF BELIEVERS

nicknames ; Ill-seeming is a name connoting wickedness (to be used for one) after he has believed ; And those who do not desist are (indeed) doing wrong. (Hujrat 49:11)

Making peace between Believers

The Believers are but a single brotherhood, so make peace and reconciliation between your two (contending) brothers ; And fear Allah, that you may receive (His) Mercy. (Hujrat 49:10)

Greeting a Believer

When a (courteous) greeting is offered to you, meet it with a greeting still more courteous, or (at least) of equal courtesy ; Allah takes careful account of all things. (Nisa 4:86)

Taking revenge from a Believer

The recompense for an injury is an injury equal thereto (in degree) ; but if a person forgives and makes reconciliation, his reward is due from Allah ; For Allah loves not those who do wrong. (Shura 42:40)

Killing a Believer

If a men kills a Believer intentionally, his recompense is Hell, to abide therein (for ever), and the wrath and the curse of Allah are upon him, and a dreadful penalty is (also) prepared for him. (Nisa 4:93)

FAMILY LIFE AND SOCIAL OBLIGATIONS IN ISLAM

COMMANDMENTS IN AHADITH

The nature of Islamic Brotherhood

Numan ibn Bashir reported that Rasulullah s.a.w. said :
You will see the Believers in their mutual kindness, love and sympathy just like one body. When a limb complains, the whole body responds to it with wakefulness. (Bukhari, Muslim)

Abu Musa narrated that Rasulullah s.a.w. said :
The Believer is for another Believer like a building, some of which strengthens the other. Saying this Rasulullah s.a.w. interlaced his fingers. (Bukhari, Muslim)

Admonition for bringing division amongst the Believers

Osamah ibn Sharik reported that Rasulullah s.a.w. said :
Whoever comes out to make division among my followers, smite his neck. (Nasai)

Islam does not allow a person to take the life of another person under any condition. This Hadith refers to the responsibility of the state. If a person revolts against the state and thus brings about disunity amongst the Believers, the state then has the right to kill him.

Abdullah ibn Abbas related that Rasulullah s.a.w. said :
Whoever sees anything in his leader that he dislikes, he should be patient, as I find that there is none who secedes himself from the united body even to a hand's span and dies, then he dies as one during the days of ignorance. (Bukhari, Muslim)

One has to obey a Muslim leader as long as he does not cross the limits set by Allah. If a person or a group of people find something that they do not like in their leader, they should

MUTUAL OBLIGATIONS OF BELIEVERS

correct it by constitutional means. Islam does not allow one to revolt against a leader and thus create disunity among the Muslims. If one goes out of the Muslim community and dies, then according to this Hadith, he will die as an unbeliever during the days of ignorance.

Abdullah ibn Umar reported that Rasulullah s.a.w. said : Follow the biggest party, because whoever becomes separate will be separated in Hell. (Ibn Majah)

Abdullah ibn Umar narrated that Rasulullah s.a.w. said : Allah will not gather together my followers over misguidance, and the Hand of Allah is upon the united body, and whoever becomes separate, will be separated in Hell. (Tirmidhī)

This Hadith gives us the glad tidings that the majority of the Muslim Ummah will always be on the right path. We should therefore stay with the majority and dissociate ourselves from those who bring disunity to the Muslim community. The Hadith also states that one who separates himself from the Muslim community will first go to Hell and suffer for his sin of causing disunity and then be allowed to enter Paradise.

Mutual obligations of Believers

Abu Hurairah related that Rasulullah s.a.w. said : The rights of a Muslim upon another Muslim are six : When you meet him, salute him ; When he calls you, respond to him ; When he seeks your advice, give him advice ; When he sneezes, and praises Allah (by saying *Al Hamdu Lillah*), respond to him (by saying *Yarhamu kam Allah*) ; When he falls ill, visit him ; And when he dies, follow his bier. (Muslim)

Aishah reported that Rasulullah s.a.w. said :

FAMILY LIFE AND SOCIAL OBLIGATIONS IN ISLAM

It is not befitting for a Muslim to keep apart from another Muslim beyond three days ; then when he meets him, he shall salute him. He shall salute him three times if he does not receive any return for his salutation. (Abu Daud)

The Hadith refers to two Muslims who have been separated from each other due to some dispute between them. It calls for having a reconciliation within three days. Another version of this Hadith reported by Bukhari and Muslim adds : The better of them is he who is the first to give a salutation to his brother.

Abdullah ibn Umar reported that Rasulullah S.A.W. once ascended the pulpit and proclaimed with a loud voice : O Congregation ! Whoever has accepted Islam with his tongue while *Eman* (faith) is not (yet) firmly rooted in his heart ! Oppress not the Believers, nor scold them, nor follow their secrets, for whoever follows the secrets of his Muslim brother, Allah will follow his secrets, and whosoever's secrets are followed by Allah, Allah will disgrace him even though he may be in the interior most of his home. (Tirmidhi)

This Hadith teaches us that no man is free of faults and that the individual members of Muslim Brotherhood should cover the faults of their fellow brothers. It also calls for respecting the privacy of their fellow brothers and not for investigating their secrets. The Hadith also makes it clear that these are amongst the essential attributes of *Eman*.

Abdullah Ibn Umar reported that Rasulullah S.A.W. said : A Muslim is a brother to a Muslim. He neither wrongs him, nor hands him over (to another). Whoever helps his brother in need, Allah will help him in his need. Whoever removes a calamity from his brother, Allah

MUTUAL OBLIGATIONS OF BELIEVERS

will remove a calamity from him from the calamities of the Day of Judgement, and whoever conceals the faults of his brother, Allah will conceal his sins on the Day of Judgement. (Bukhari, Muslim)

Abu Hurairah narrated that Rasulullah s.a.w. said :
The Believer is a mirror to a Believer, and the Believer is a brother to a Believer. He removes his injuries from him and protects him (even) in his absence. (Abu Daud, Tirmidhi)

Abu Hurairah reported that Rasulullah s.a.w. said :
A Muslim is a brother to another Muslim. He should not cheat him, nor tell him a lie, nor humiliate him. Everything owned by a Muslim is forbidden for another Muslim. Righteousness is an attribute of the heart. It is sufficient evil for a man even to look down on his Muslim brother with disdain. (Tirmidhi)

Reward for loving a Believer

Abu Hurairah related that Rasulullah s.a.w. said :
You shall not enter Paradise until you Believe, and you will not Believe until you love one another. Shall I not guide you to this thing ? When you will do it, you will love one another. Spread the greetings of *Salam Alaik*. (Muslim)

The Hadith states that loving our fellow Believers is one of the criterion as well as a means of increasing our faith. The more we love our brothers, the more we shall have faith and this will help us enter Paradise.

Abu Hurairah reported that Rasulullah s.a.w. said :
Surely there are pillars made of emeralds with engravings of fine silk therein. They have open doors shining like bright stars.

FAMILY LIFE AND SOCIAL OBLIGATIONS IN ISLAM

They inquired : O the Prophet of Allah ! Who will live therein ? He answered :

The mutual lovers for the cause of Allah, those who assemble together for the cause of Allah, and those who meet one another for the cause of Allah. (Baihaqi)

Warning for having malice against a Believer

Abu Hurairah narrated that Rasulullah s.a.w. said :

The actions of men are submitted to Allah, twice a week, on Monday and Thursday. Then Allah forgives every Believing man except the two persons between whom is malice. It is said : Leave these two until they come to terms. (Muslim)

The Hadith makes it very clear that if there be malice between two Believers, both are deprived of Allah's Mercy. It is the duty of both to bring about reconciliation no matter who happens to be at fault.

Having goodwill towards Believers

Tamim Dari related that Rasulullah s.a.w. said :

Faith is good will

he asked : Towards whom ? He answered :

Towards Allah, His Prophet, leading Muslims and the general public. (Muslim)

Anas ibn Malik related that Rasulullah s.a.w. said :

A person is not a true Believer unless he desires for his brother that which he desires for himself. (Bukhari, Muslim)

Giving of proper counsel

Jarir reported : I took allegiance to Rasulullah s.a.w. on conditions of observing Salat, paying Zakat, and advising every Muslim. (Bukhari, Muslim)

MUTUAL OBLIGATIONS OF BELIEVERS

This Hadith reminds us that social obligations in Islam are as important as the religious obligations. A Muslim is not supposed to be indifferent to the needs of his fellow brothers. If he sees one of his brothers committing a mistake or making a wrong decision, it then becomes his duty to give him proper advice and to save him from making a mistake.

Safeguarding the honour of a Believer

Jaber narrated that Rasulullah s.a.w. said :

There is no Muslim who dishonours another Muslim in a place where his honour is at stake or injured except that Allah Almighty will dishonour him in a place where Allah's help is needed ; And there is no Muslim who helps another Muslim in a place where his honour is at stake or injured except that Almighty Allah will help him in a place where Allah's help is needed. (Abu Daud)

Anas ibn Malik reported that Rasulullah s.a.w. said :

Whoever sees the backbiting of his brother in his presence and he, being capable of helping him, helps him, Allah will help him in this world and also in the Hereafter. If he does not help, being capable of helping him, Allah will overtake him in this world and in the Hereafter. (Sharah al Sunnah)

Islam calls for taking an active role in safeguarding the due rights of every Muslim in the community. A Muslim is supposed to care for the good name of his brothers and sisters even in their absence.

Helping a needy Believer

Abu Sa'eed reported that Rasulullah s.a.w. said :

If a Muslim clothes a naked Muslim, Allah will clothe him in the green robes of Paradise ; if a Muslim feeds a hungry Muslim, Allah will feed him from the fruits of

FAMILY LIFE AND SOCIAL OBLIGATIONS IN ISLAM

Paradise, and if a Muslim gives a drink to a thirsty Muslim, Allah will give him the drink from the closed up Fountain. (Abu Daud, Tirmidhi)

It appears that the word "closed up fountain" refers to the Fountain of Kauthar. Every one on the Day of Judgement will be extremely thirsty. The Believers will gather on the Fountain of Kauthar and shall receive the most refreshing drink from the hands of the Prophet. The Hadith gives this glad tidings to those who quench the thirst of their Muslim brothers in this world.

Anas ibn Malik reported that Rasulullah s.a.w. said :
If anyone provides help to one of my needy people out of a wish to please me, he has pleased me. He who has pleased me has pleased Allah, and he who has pleased Allah will be brought by Him into Paradise. (Baihaqi)

This Hadith is another reminder to those who claim to love the Prophet. The true love of the Prophet calls for a few commitments in life and one of them is to help the needy Muslims in the community.

Anas ibn Malik related that Rasulullah s.a.w. said :
Help your brother whether he is doing wrong or is being wronged. A man said : O Messenger of Allah ! I can help him when he is being wronged, but how can I help him when he is doing wrong ? and he replied :
By preventing him from doing wrong. That is your help to him. (Bukhari, Muslim)

Abu Hurairah reported that Rasulullah s.a.w. said :
Allah, the Lord of Honour and Glory, will say on the Day of Judgement : Son of Adam ! I asked you for food and you did not feed me. The man will exclaim :

MUTUAL OBLIGATIONS OF BELIEVERS

Lord ! how could I have fed you, while you are the Lord of the World ! Allah will say : Did you not realize that My servant so and so asked you for food and you did not feed him ? Did you not realize that if you had fed him, you would have found your reward with Me ? Son of Adam ! I asked you for a drink and you did not give Me a drink. The Man will exclaim : Lord ! How could I have given You a drink while You are the Lord of the Worlds ! Allah will say : My servant so and so asked you for a drink and you did not give him the drink. Did you not realize that if you had given him the drink, you would have found its reward with Me. (Muslim).

The Hadith shows the importance of social obligations in Islam. Helping the poor and needy is as virtuous in Islam as serving the Almighty Allah. The Hadith also warns us that if we do not help the poor and needy in our community, Allah will be displeased with us on the Day of Judgement.

Visiting the sick

Abu Hurairah narrated that Rasulullah S.A.W. said : When a Muslim visits his Muslim brother in sickness, he certainly continues to pluck fruits of Paradise, till he returns. (Muslim)

Abu Hurairah reported that Rasulullah S.A.W. said : Allah, the Lord of honour and glory, will say on the Day of Judgement : Son of Adam ! I was sick and you did not visit Me. The man will exclaim : Lord ! how could I have visited You while you are the Lord of the worlds. Allah will say : Did you not realize that My servant so and so was sick and you did not visit him. Did you not realize that if you had visited him, you would have found Me with him ? (Muslim)

FAMILY LIFE AND SOCIAL OBLIGATIONS IN ISLAM

A part of this Hadith has been presented earlier. It reiterates the importance of our social obligations in the Muslim community.

Covering up of faults

Abu Hurairah related that Rasulullah S.A.W. said :
Allah will cover the faults, on the Day of Judgement, of the person who covered up the faults of another person in this world. (Muslim)

Making peace between Believers

Abu Hurairah reported that Rasulullah S.A.W. said :
To bring out just reconciliation between two contestants is an act of charity. (Bukhari, Muslim)

Abu Darda narrated that Rasulullah S.A.W. said :
Shall I not inform you about what is better than fasting and praying ? It is to restore peace between two contending persons, since a dispute between the two is harmful to both of them. (Abu Daud, Tirmidhi)

The Hadith speaks of the beauty of the teachings of Islam. The word Islam means peace. Hence bringing peace between two Believers in Islam is more virtuous than the offering of ritual prayers.

Umme Kulthum related that she heard Rasulullah S.A.W. saying :

One, who tries to bring about peace between people, and has to say something which is not true is not a liar. (Bukhari, Muslim)

Telling a lie is a sin in Islam. Based on this and a few similar Ahadith, the Fuqaha (Islamic Jurists) say that telling a lie is permissible to bring peace between two Believers and also between a husband and his wife.

MUTUAL OBLIGATIONS OF BELIEVERS

Making intercession for a Believer

Abu Musa Ash'ari narrated that whenever a needy person came to Rasulullah S.A.W. he would turn to those present and say :

Intercede for him, you will have your reward and Allah causes that which He likes to issue from the tongue of His Prophet. (Bukhari, Muslim)

This Hadith teaches us two basic things. First, whatever the Prophet said was not out of his desire but was inspired by Almighty Allah. This is what the Qur'an has also stated very clearly : *He does not speak of his own desire. It is no less than inspiration sent down to him* (53:3-4). Second, it was the noble practice of the Prophet that when a needy person approached him and he was not in a position to help him, he asked his companions to help him. Needless to say we should follow this practice in our lives.

Respecting an aged Believer

Abu Musa related that Rasulullah S.A.W. said :

It is part of glorification of Allah to respect an aged Muslim, and one who has learned the Qur'an by heart, provided he makes no interpolations in it and does not contradict it by his conduct, and also a just ruler. (Abu Daud)

This Hadith equates the act of respecting an aged Believer to that of glorification of Allah. It is because of this basic teaching of Islam that old age persons occupy the most respected and dignified position in the Muslim community.

Anas ibn Malik reported that Rasulullah S.A.W. said :

If a youth respects an old person on account of his age, Allah appoints someone who will respect him in his old age. (Tirmidhi)

FAMILY LIFE AND SOCIAL OBLIGATIONS IN ISLAM

This Hadith gives an indirect glad tidings to those who honour old persons, that Allah will give them long lives and that they also shall reach old ages.

Punishment for killing a Believer

Abu Sa'eed reported that Rasulullah S.A.W. said :

If all the inmates of the heavens and earth join together to shed the blood of a Believer, Allah will surely throw all of them into the Fire (of Hell). (Tirmidhi)

Abdullah ibn Umar narrated that Rasulullah S.A.W. said :
The passing away of the world is surely easier to Allah than the murder of a Muslim. (Nasai, Tirmidhi)

Islam gives utmost importance to the sanctity of human life especially the life of a Believer. According to this Hadith, the life of a Believer is dearer to Allah than the whole world. It is because of this basic teaching of Islam that street crimes and murders are almost non-existent in Muslim community.

Jorair reported that Rasulullah S.A.W. said :

You must not become un-believers after me, some of you smiting the necks of others. (Bukhari, Muslim)

This Hadith suggests that killing each other is an act that does not befit the Believers. One who does this act commits a sin as great as going out of the folds of Islam. The Hadith also suggests that killing each other is an act that befits the unbelievers. The statistics of murder in the Western society confirm this point beyond any shadow of doubt.

CHAPTER 7

BELIEVERS' SOCIAL OBLIGATIONS

Religion is generally regarded as a matter of one's personal life. Islam, however, is not just a religion, but a Deen. It encompasses the spiritual and material aspects of one's personal as well as socio-political life and provides a well-integrated code of human behavior as a whole. The Qur'an and Hadith provide well-defined guidance concerning a Believer's obligations to Almighty Allah, and His Creations, particularly to fellow human beings. These obligations begin with one's family and then spread out gradually to cover the rest of humanity.

The Qur'an and Hadith also make it clear that social obligations in a way are more important than those towards Allah. If someone commits a personal sin against Allah and then turns to him with sincere repentance, Allah may forgive his sin. This is because Allah is Oft-forgiving, Most Merciful and loves those who turn to Him with sincere repentance. If, on the contrary, a person commits a social crime and usurps the due rights of an individual, he will meet Allah on the Day of Judgement with the other person's claim upon him. Allah in this case will serve as a judge between the two and will not forgive the oppressor unless the other person forgives him. This is because Allah is Just and commands us to practice justice towards fellow human beings.

The Qur'an and Hadith have clearly defined the respective rights of various members of a community. We should acquire

proper knowledge of these rights and try our best to honour them.

NEIGHBOURS

The people closest to an individual outside the bonds of family are his neighbours. Often, the contact with a neighbour is more intimate and permanent than that with a family member. If each person takes care of the due rights of his neighbour, this will lead to the prosperity and security of the whole community. One of the reasons for the increased crime rate in the Western society is apathy towards neighbours. Islamic teachings give utmost importance to the rights of neighbours. Moreover, the rights of neighbours in Islam exist regardless of religious or other differences. It is for this reason that street crimes in a Muslim society are very rare. The Qur'an states :

Serve Allah, and join not any partners with Him ; And do Ehsan with parents, kinfolk, orphans, those in need, neighbours who are near, neighbours who are strangers, the companions by your side, the way-farer (you meet), and what your right hand possesses (i.e. servants and slaves). (Nisa 4:36)

The Prophet through his conduct and Ahadith gave supreme importance to the rights of neighbours. "Love thy neighbour as thyself " is just a sweet expression of the West. Ahadith, on the other hand, define the rights of neighbours in the most comprehensive and well-defined language. Based on these Ahadith, the Fuqaha (Jurists) have derived various rules pertaining to the legal rights of neighbour. No religion or system in the world comes even close to the noble teachings of Islam regarding the rights of neighbours. Following are a few related Ahadith.

Types of neighbours and their respective rights

Hasan ibn Sufyan reported that Rasulullah s.a.w. said :
The neighbours are of three classes. A neighbour who has a single right, a neighbour who has double rights, and a neighbour who has triple rights. The neighbour who has three rights is a Muslim neighbour having a family relation. For him is the right of neighbourhood, the right of Islam and the right of family relations. As for the one who has double rights, he is a Muslim neighbour, who has the right of neighbourhood and the right of Islam. The one who has a single right is a polytheist neighbour. (Masnad of Bazar, Al Hulyah. of Abu Noaim)

Aishah asked Rasulullah s.a.w. : I have two neighbours. To whom of these two shall I send my present first ?
He answered :
To the one who is nearer to you in respect of your door. (Bukhari)

Importance of neighbour's rights

Aishah and also Abdullah ibn Umar narrated that Rasulullah s.a.w. said :

Archangel Jibrael kept on exhorting me about the rights of neighbours until I felt that they would be included in the category of heirs. (Bukhari, Muslim)

Archangel Jibrael was the one who used to bring Allah's revelation to the Prophet. So whatever Jibrael said to him concerning neighbours was a revelation from Almighty Allah. It appears from the Hadith that Jibrael brought these messages so frequently and stressed the importance of the rights of neighbours so much that the Prophet thought that neighbours would be included among heirs.

FAMILY LIFE AND SOCIAL OBLIGATIONS IN ISLAM

Abu Hurairah narrated that Rasulullah s.a.w. said :
He who believes in Allah and the Last Day must not put his neighbour to inconvenience, and he who believes in Allah and the Last Day must speak beneficently or keep quiet. (Bukhari, Muslim)

Abdullah ibn Umar reported that Rasulullah s.a.w. said :
The best companion in the sight of Allah is the one who is the best among all others to his companions, and the best neighbour in the sight of Allah is the one who is the best among all others to his neighbours. (Tirmidhi)

The first dispute on the Day of Judgement

Oqaba ibn 'Amer reported that Rasulullah s.a.w. said :
The first two disputants on the Day of Judgement will be the neighbours. (Ahmad)

A Criterion for the Love of Allah and His Prophet

Abdul Rehman ibn Abi Qarad reported : One day the Prophet performed ablution. His companions started to anoint themselves with the water of his ablution. The Prophet asked them : What makes you do this ? They answered : the love of Allah and His Messenger. Rasulullah s.a.w. then said :

Let him who loves Allah and His Messenger and desires that Allah and His Messenger love him, should be truthful in his speech when he speaks, fulfill his trusts when he is trusted, and be good to those who are his neighbours. (Baihaqi)

This Hadith is a reminder to those who claim to love the Prophet of Allah. The love of the Prophet calls for a total commitment to all of his teachings. The above Hadith states

SOCIAL OBLIGATIONS

only three of his noble teachings. One of these is to be good to our neighbours.

A Criterion of Eman

Abu Hurairah related that Rasulullah S.A.W. said :

By Allah he does not believe ! By Allah he does not believe ! By Allah he does not believe !

He was asked : Who does not believe ? Rasulullah S.A.W. answered :

He whose neighbour is not secure from his mischiefs. (Bukhari, Muslim)

Abdullah Ibn Mas'ud related that Rasulullah S.A.W. said :

By Him in Whose hands is my life, no man is a true Muslim, until his heart and tongue accept Islam, and he does not truly believe until his neighbour is safe from his mischiefs. (Ahmad)

These Ahadith give us one of the criteria of true faith and it is that one must be good toward one's neighbour.

Anas ibn Malik narrated that Rasulullah S.A.W. said :

He does not have faith in me (as Allah's Messenger), who sleeps comfortably with his stomach full while his neighbour is hungry and he is unaware of it. (Tabrani)

The noble teachings of Islam call for caring for the basic needs of the neighbour. The Hadith means that if a person is so careless of his social obligations that he takes his full daily meal and then goes to sleep at night without bothering to know that his neighbour is hungry, then he does not justify his faith in the Prophet as the Messenger of Allah. It should be noted that no distinction is made in this Hadith between a Muslim and non-Muslim neighbour.

A criterion of good conduct

Abdullah ibn Mas'ud related that a man asked :

O Messenger of Allah ! how could I know when I do something good and when I do something bad ?

Rasulullah S.A.W. answered :

When you hear your neighbour saying : You have done good, you have then done good, and when you hear your neighbour saying : You have done bad, then you have done bad. (Ibn Majah)

The person closest to an individual outside the bonds of family is his neighbour. The relations with neighbour are thus one of the most valid criteria of one's social conduct.

Rights due to neighbours

Moawya reported that Rasulullah S.A.W. said :

Following are the rights of your neighbour upon you : If he is sick, visit him ; if he dies, help in his funeral ; if he is in need, give him loan ; if he commits a bad deed, cover him up ; if he is blessed with some good thing, felicitate him ; if he meets a trouble, sympathize with him ; do not raise the walls of your home so high that you may deprive his home of fresh air ; when you cook something good at your home, take care that its aroma does not cause a sense of deprivation to your neighbour or his family, unless you send some of it to him. (Tabrani)

The Hadith speaks of the beauty and blessings of Islamic teachings that call for supporting neighbours during their happiness and health and also during their adversity and sickness. It also instructs the rich in the society not to build such houses that may obstruct the supply of air and light to the

SOCIAL OBLIGATIONS

houses of their neighbours. It goes to the extent of caring for the emotions of the neighbours as well. It is possible that a rich person may often have good food and its aroma may hurt his poor neighbour, especially his children. The Hadith clearly states to avoid it or to share the good food with the poor neighbour and his children.

Abdullah ibn 'Amr ibn 'As reported that Rasulullah s.a.w. said :

If you bring some fruits for your family, send some of them to your neighbour. If it may not be possible, then bring them secretly and do not let your children take them outside, lest the neighbour's children see them, and feel deprived and hurt. (Kunzul A'amäl)

The Hadith reiterates the importance of sharing Allah's blessings with neighbours. If this may not be possible, the rich should care for the feelings of their neighbours. They should practice a certain level of modesty in their behavior and avoid showing off intentionally or unintentionally.

Giving presents to neighbours

Abu Dhar related that Rasulullah s.a.w. said :

When you cook broth, increase its water and give some of it to your neighbours. (Muslim)

Abu Hurairah reported that Rasulullah s.a.w. said :

O Muslim women ! No female neighbour must hold in contempt her neighbour even if it consists of giving her a mere hoof of goat. (Bukhari; Muslim)

It is generally not possible for poor people to send expensive presents to their neighbours. The Hadith instructs the neighbours to exchange presents even if it is as insignificant a thing as the hoof of a goat.

Warning to those who offend their neighbours

Anas ibn Malik related that Rasulullah s.a.w. said :
One whose neighbour is not safe from his mischief shall not enter Paradise. (Muslim)

Abu Hurairah narratēd that a man asked : O Messenger of Allah ! Such and such woman is reputed for much prayer, fasting and almsgiving, but she also offends her neighbours with her tongue. Rasulullah s.a.w. said :
She will go to Hell.

The narrator then said : Such and such woman is not reputed for her fasting, alms-giving and prayers, but she gives alms of the remainder of curd and she does not offend her neighbours with her tongue. Rasulullah s.a.w. said :

She will go to Paradise. (Ahmad, Baihaqi)

The Hadith illustrates in a beautiful manner the essence of the teachings of Islam. Prayers and good deeds alone will not lead one to Paradise. It is equally important in Islam that one should fulfill one's social obligations as well. The Hadith, however, does not mean that the person who fails in his social obligations will never enter Paradise. It means that he will have to go first to Hell and suffer for his sins and then enter Paradise. Numerous Ahadith state that the believers will eventually enter Paradise.

Most valuable possessions

Sa'ad ibn Abi Waqas reported that Rasulullah s.a.w. said :

The most valuable possessions of a Muslim are : A comfortable home, a good neighbour and a pleasant means of conveyance. (Ahmed)

Sharing of knowledge with neighbours

Alqamah ibn Abdul Rahman narrated through his father who narrated through his father that Rasulullah S.A.W. once gave a special sermon and said :

Why is it that some of you do not create religious awareness among their neighbours, they do not give them proper education, warn them of the evils of ignorance and do not forbid them from what is prohibited. And why is it that some of you make no effort to learn Deen from their neighbours, acquire religious awareness and know the evils of the ignorance of Deen. By Allah ! It is the duty of those having knowledge to teach Faith to their neighbours and create a religious awareness among them. They should counsel them, exhort them to do what is good and abstain from what is forbidden. In the same way the less educated people should seek knowledge and understanding of faith from their neighbours and also take advice from them. Otherwise, I will soon have a severe punishment for them. (Tabrani)

The commentators of Hadith say that the Prophet in this Hadith referred to the people of the Ash'ari, who had some knowledgeable persons among them, but close to them lived a community which had very little knowledge. When the Ash'aris came to know of this Hadith, they approached the Prophet and promised him to teach their neighbours in one year.

It is clear from this Hadith that meeting the material or emotional needs alone does not fulfill our obligations towards neighbours. We are also required to meet their educational and spiritual needs. We should give them proper education and create among them a religious awareness. It is equally important for the less knowledgeable in the community to seek knowledge from their learned neighbours.

ORPHANS

There are generally a few orphans in every community. Their number often increases manifold due to wars or natural calamities. Since Islam is a Deen, it addresses itself to their needs as well. First, it guarantees their basic rights in society. It then promotes a feeling of love and compassion for them so that each orphan may find a family that takes care of his physical and emotional needs.

COMMANDMENTS OF THE QUR'AN

Basic rights of orphans

And know that out of all the booty that you may acquire, a fifth share is assigned to Allah, and to the Prophet, and to near relatives, orphans, the needy and the wayfarer. (Anfal 8:41)

The verse of Sura Nisa 4:36 mentioned earlier also states the importance of the rights of orphans.

Kindness to orphans

They ask you concerning orphans ; Say : The best thing to do is what is for their good ; If you mix their affairs with yours, they are your brethren. (Baqarah 2:220)

Therefore, treat not the orphans with harshness. (Dhuha 93:9)

Have you observed the one, who denies the Day of Judgement ; That is he who repulses the orphan, and encourages not the feeding of the indigent. (Ma'un 107:1-2)

SOCIAL OBLIGATIONS

Safeguarding orphan's property

To orphans restore their property (when they reach their age of maturity) ; Do not substitute (your) worthless (substance) for (their) good ones, and devour not their substance (by mixing it up) with your own ; For this is indeed a great sin. (Nisa 4:2)

Come not near to the orphan's property except to improve it, until he attains the age of full maturity. (Bani Israil 17:34)

Spending on orphans

They ask you : What they should spend (in charity) ; Say : Whatever you spend that is good ; It is for parents and kindred and orphans and those in want and for wayfarers ; And whatever you do that is good, Allah knows it well. (Baqarah 2:215)

Punishment for usurping orphan's right

Those who unjustly eat up the property of orphans, eat up a fire into their own bodies, they will soon be enduring (the punishment of) a blazing Fire. (Nisa 4:10)

COMMANDMENTS IN AHADITH

It is related by Sahl ibn Sa'ad that Rasulullah s.a.w. said :

Whoever supports an orphan belonging to his own or any other family will be as close to me in Paradise as there fingers. (Bukhari)

Sahl added that the Prophet then raised his index and middle finger and there was only a little space separating the two at that time.

FAMILY LIFE AND SOCIAL OBLIGATIONS IN ISLAM

The Prophet, in the world Hereafter, will be at the highest stage of Paradise. This Hadith states that those who will care for the needs of orphans will be at the stage of Paradise very close to that of the Prophet. It should, however, be recalled that one good deed alone will not lead one to Paradise. One has to, first, live a virtuous life and then care for the orphans in order to receive the blessings mentioned in this Hadith.

Abdullah ibn Umar reported that Rasulullah s.a.w. said :
The person who took care of an orphan from among the Muslims and shared his food and drink with him, Allah will allow him to enter Paradise, provided he is not guilty of an unpardonable sin. (Tirmidhi)

The Hadith reiterates the importance of living a virtuous life in order to receive the blessings of caring for an orphan. A few of the major unpardonable sins are, associating partners with Allah, murder, backbiting and usurping the rights of fellow human beings.

It is narrated by Abu Hurairah that Rasulullah s.a.w. said :

The best of Muslim homes is the home in which an orphan lives and is treated in a loving and affectionate manner, and the worst of Muslim homes is the home in which an orphan lives and is treated unkindly or cruelly. (Ibn Majah)

Abu Shuraih Khuwailad ibn Amr Khuza'i related that Rasulullah s.a.w. said :

O Allah ! I declare sinful any failure to safeguard the rights of two weak ones ; orphans and women. (Nasai)

The rights of orphans are like those of neighbours. They are irrespective of their religious beliefs, race or color. Ahadith, however, make it clear that our first obligation is towards the Muslim orphans. Lately the Muslims are going through numerous

SOCIAL OBLIGATIONS

persecutions in different parts of world. Innumerable Muslims have either been killed or are still being killed in places like Afghanistan, Kashmir, Bosnia, Palestine, Chechniya etc. The Muslim Ummah is now faced with a vast number of Muslim orphans. We should do our best to help these orphans. We can then justly hope for the blessings mentioned in these Ahadith.

THE POOR

COMMANDMENTS OF THE QUR'AN

Commandments concerning rights of the poor

And render to the kindred their due rights, as (also) to those in want, and to the wayfarer.

(Bani Israil 17:26)

Alms are for the poor and the needy, and those employed to administer the (funds), for those whose hearts have been (recently) reconciled (to Islam), for those in bondage and in debit, and for the cause of Allah, and for the wayfarer ; (Thus is it) ordained by Allah, and Allah is full of knowledge and wisdom.
(Taubah 9:60)

That which Allah gives as spoils to His Messenger from the people of townships, it is for Allah and His Messenger and for the near of his kin, and the orphans and the needy and the wayfarer; that it becomes not a commodity between the rich among you. (Hashr 59:7)

Feeding the poor

As to the righteous, they shall drink of a cup mixed with Kafur, a fountain where the devoted do drink, making it gush forth abundantly ; They perform

FAMILY LIFE AND SOCIAL OBLIGATIONS IN ISLAM

(their) vows and they fear a Day whose evil flies far and wide ; And they feed, for the love of Allah, the indigent, the orphan, and the captives, (saying) we feed you for the sake of Allah alone, no rewards do we seek from you, nor (even) thanks. (Insan 76:5-9)

And (ask) of the sinners : What led you into Hell-Fire ? They will say : We were not of those who observed Salat, nor were we of those who fed the indigent, but we used to take vanities with vain talkers, and we used to deny the Day of Judgement. (Mudassir 74:42-46)

Allah will not call you to account for what is futile in your oaths, but He will call you to account for your deliberate oaths ; For expiation, feed ten indigent persons, on a scale of the average for the food of your families, or clothe them, ... (Maidah 5:92)

Those who divorce their wives by Zihar, then wish to go back on the words they uttered, (it is ordained that such a one)... should feed sixty indigent ones. (Mujadalah 58:3-4)

Zihar was a pagan custom of divorce, where the husband said to his wife : "You are to me as the back of my mother" Islam abolished this system of divorce.

COMMANDMENTS IN AHADITH

Abu Hurairah reported that Rasulullah s.a.w. said :
Poor is not one who goes around asking people and who can be turned away with a morsel or two or a date or two. A truly poor person is he who does not find enough to keep body and soul together, does not

SOCIAL OBLIGATIONS

disclose his poverty so that he might be given alms, and does not stand up to ask. (Bukhari)

The Hadith asks us to look for those respected ones in the community who do not have sufficient means to support themselves, but do not disclose their needs to others due to their modesty and shyness.

Helping the poor

Abu Hurairah reported that a man complained to Rasulullah S.A.W. about the hardness of his heart and he said :

Be benevolent to orphans and feed the poor. (Ahmad)

Anas ibn Malik narrated that Rasulullah S.A.W. said :

O Aishah ! Do not turn away the poor without giving them something, though it be just a piece of date. O Aishah ! love the poor and let them come to you for help. Allah will then, surely, take you near Him on the Day of Judgement. (Ibn Majah, Tirmidhi)

Abdullah ibn Umar narrated that Rasulullah S.A.W. said : There is a key for every thing and (one of the) keys to Paradise is love for the poor. (Daraqutni)

Anas ibn Malik related that Rasulullah S.A.W. said :

The best charity is to satisfy a hungry belly. (Baihaqi)

WIDOW

Abu Hurairah narrated that Rasulullah S.A.W. said :

He who exerts himself on behalf of a widow is like the one who strives in the cause of Allah.

Abu Hurairah added that probably he also said :

He is like the one who spends the nights in prayer and fasts during the day permanently. (Bukhari, Muslim)

FAMILY LIFE AND SOCIAL OBLIGATIONS IN ISLAM

Striving for the cause of Allah is one of the most virtuous acts in Islam. Similarly spending nights in praying and days in fasting are also deeds of utmost merit. This Hadith states that the same is the reward of a person who takes pains to help a widow.

SLAVES AND SERVANTS

Slavery was a common practice in Arabia and in most parts of the world at the time of the advent of Prophet Muhammad S.A.W. The victorious nations took their captives as slaves and treated them most mercilessly to their advantage. Slaves were treated as personal commodity and subjected to the most inhuman treatment. Such practices were continued even in America as late as hundred years ago. Prophet Muhammad S.A.W. is the first person in history who safeguarded the rights of slaves more than fourteen centuries ago. He gave them basic human rights, upgraded their position in society and exhorted his followers to treat them with utmost love, care and compassion.

The Islamic teachings were directed at a gradual reform of the age-old practice of slavery. Islam did not abolish slavery in one sweep. This would have meant throwing the most underprivileged social class of people out in the cold, without making any reasonable arrangements for their survival as free citizens. Any abrupt and thoughtless action would surely have created a class of unskilled vagabonds, beggars and thieves. The Islamic approach was instead designed to let these people continue to live with their masters as house-hold members of their families. In the transitory period the masters were required to treat their wards in a fraternal manner, providing them the same food and clothing that they themselves consumed. At the same time, they were supposed to facilitate the eventual freedom of slaves and to integrate them free and independent

SOCIAL OBLIGATIONS

members of society. It is because of this teaching that slavery is now practically extinct throughout the Muslim world.

The Holy Qur'an and Ahadith give clear injunctions for safeguarding the due rights of slaves and servants.

COMMANDMENTS IN THE QUR'AN

Kind treatment to slaves and servants

Serve Allah and join not any partners with Allah, and do Ehsan with parents, kinsfolk, orphans, those in need, neighbours who are near, neighbours who are strangers, the companions by your side, the way-farer (you meet), and what your right hand possesses.

(Nisa 4:36)

“what your right hand possesses” includes not only slaves and servants but also the animals that a person could have. The Qur'an commands us to treat all of these with *Ehsan* i.e. the excellence of kind and just treatment.

Freeing of slaves

And if any of your slaves ask for a deed in writing (to enable them to earn their freedom for a certain sum of money), give them such a deed; if you know any good in them, give them something yourself out of the means which Allah has given to you. (Noor 24:33)

A slave in a Muslim society has the right to ask his master for a written agreement that may set him free. The master is required not only to honour this agreement, but to help his slave through his own money to earn his freedom. This was a common practice in early Muslim history and a number of free slaves later rose to important positions in the society.

FAMILY LIFE AND SOCIAL OBLIGATIONS IN ISLAM

Have We not made for him a pair of eyes, and a tongue, and a pair of lips, and shown him two different highways? But he made no haste on the path that is steep. And what will explain to you the path that is steep? (It is) the freeing of slaves, or the giving of food in a day of hunger to the orphan with claims of relationship, or to the indigent (down) in the dust. (Balad 90:8-16)

COMMANDMENTS IN AHADITH

Forgiving a servant

Abdullah ibn Umar reported that a man came to the Prophet and asked him: O Messenger of Allah! How many times should we pardon a servant? He remained silent. The man repeated his question and he again remained silent. The man then repeated his question a third time. Rasulullah s.a.w. then answered:

Pardon him seventy times every day.

(Abu Daud, Tirmidhi)

Rights of servants and slaves

Abu Dharr reported that Rasulullah s.a.w. said:

The servants and slaves are your brethren that Allah has put under your hands. So, feed them out of what you eat yourself, clothe them as you clothe yourself, do not give them such work that will overcome them. If you give them what will overcome them, then assist them therein. (Bukhari, Muslim)

Abu Hurairah related that Rasulullah s.a.w. said:

When one of your servants prepares your meal and then brings it to you, let him sit down with you and eat some of the food. If the food consists of only few

SOCIAL OBLIGATIONS

morsels, put a morsel or two in his hands therefrom. (Muslim)

Abu Dharr reported that Rasulullah s.a.w. said :
Whoever from your slaves obeys you, give him food that you yourself eat, and clothe him with what you clothe yourself. And whoever among them does not obey you, hand him over to another person and do not inflict punishment on the creation of Allah. (Abu Daud, Ahmad)

Freeing of slaves

Abdullah ibn Umar related : I heard Rasulullah s.a.w. saying :

Whoever scourges his slave for an ordained crime which he did not commit or slaps him, then his expiation is to emancipate him. (Muslim)

Punishment for mistreating the slave (servant)

Abu Bakar Siddique reported that Rasulullah s.a.w. said :
One who mistreats those under his authority shall not enter Paradise. (Ibn Majah, Tirmidhi)

It has been explained earlier that such a person will not go to Paradise with complete forgiveness. He will first go to Hell and stay there until he has paid for his sins and then shall enter Paradise.

Respect for the knowledge of slave

Ummul Husain narrated that Rasulullah s.a.w. said :
If a slave with limbs cut off be put in command over you to guide you by the Book of Allah, listen to him and obey him. (Muslim)

FAMILY LIFE AND SOCIAL OBLIGATIONS IN ISLAM

No religion or society in the world other than Islam has given such respect and dignity to its slaves and servants. It is because of these noble teachings of Islam that numerous slaves acquired their freedom and rose to very prominent positions in the early history of Muslims. Abu Hurairah was formerly a slave who later became one of the greatest scholars of Hadith. Bilal was also a freed slave who occupied the most dignified position of Muadhdhin at the Prophet's mosque. Later when the Prophet conquered Makkah, he asked Bilal to proclaim the first Adhan at Haram. History has recorded that unbelievers of Makkah were astonished to hear Bilal giving the first Adhan from the roof top of Haram. The Prophet once pointed to four scholars in Madina and said: If you want to learn the Qur'an, learn it from them. One of these scholars was Salem, a freed slave of Madina. The last expedition that the Prophet sent during his lifetime was commanded by Osama, the son of a slave. Numerous such examples can be inled from the entire history of Muslims, e.g. a family of slaves rose to be Emperors of India for many years. This is recorded in Indian history as the dynasty of slaves and the Mamluk dynasty of Egypt!

CHAPTER 8

SPRITUAL OBLIGATIONS-INVITING OTHERS TO ALLAH'S DEEN

The foregoing pages present a glimpse of family and social obligations in Islam. The discussion, however, was limited to the physical and material aspects of life. Islam as a Deen calls upon its Believers to care more for the spiritual than the physical aspects of life. The Qur'an states:

Your material things and wealth are allurements of the life of this world, but good deeds which endure are best in the sight of Allah, and best (as the basis for) hopes (in the Hereafter) (Kahf 17:46)

As Believers we should be more concerned with receiving the pleasure of Allah than the material comforts of life. If we provide an abundance of material comforts to our loved ones but do not lead them to the path of Islam, they may fail to receive the peace of mind, which is Allah's greatest blessing in the world. They may also be deprived of Allah's pleasure on the Day of Judgement and may even be consigned to Hell fire for ever. Hence our primary duty toward our loved ones and fellow human beings is to invite them to the path of Islam. This will help them to receive peace of mind in this world and the pleasure of Allah in the Hereafter. Thus inviting people to Allah's Deen is a duty more important than merely caring for their physical and material needs. This is what makes the social obligations in Islam different from those of other systems or

FAMILY LIFE AND SOCIAL OBLIGATIONS IN ISLAM

religions. Qur'an and Hadith make it clear that inviting people to Allah's Deen is one of the most essential social obligations in Islam.

Inviting people to Allah's Deen essentially consists of two things; enjoining what is right and forbidding what is wrong. As Believers, we need to perform both these things at the same time. Following are a few related commandments from the Qur'an and Hadith.

COMMANDMENTS IN THE QUR'AN

**It is the basic reason for the creation
of Muslim Ummah**

You are the best of people evolved for mankind, you enjoin what is right and forbid what is wrong, and you believe in Allah. (Al-e-Imran 3:110)

Thus have We made of you an Ummah justly balanced, that you may be a witness over the nations, as the Messenger is a witness over you. (Baqarah 2:143)

These verses are addressed to the Believers and state that Allah has made us a part of the Muslim Ummah to serve as His witness over mankind and to enjoin what is good and forbid what is wrong. The first verse also gives us the glad tidings that as long as we will do our duty, we will be the best of the people. We should recall the life of Sahaba (Prophet's companions) who were foremost in carrying out this duty. History bears witness that within a short period of 30 years they gained mastery over two great empires, the Persian and the Byzantine. They were thus the best of people from the spiritual as well as the material points of view.

SPRITUAL OBLIGATIONS

The Qur'an also states that one group of people in the Muslim Ummah should devote itself to this basic task of enjoining the right and forbidding the wrong.

Let there arise out of you a group of people inviting to all that is good, enjoining what is right, and forbidding what is wrong; they are the ones to attain felicity. (Al-e-Imran 3:104)

It is an essential attribute of Rasulullah's mission

Those who follow the Messenger, the unlettered Prophet, whom they find mentioned in their own (Scriptures), in Torah and the Gospel; for he commands them what is right and forbids them what is evil..... it is they who will prosper. (A'araf 7:157)

It is one of Allah's commandment to Rasulullah S.A.W.

Hold (fast) to forgiveness; Command what is right; But turn away from the ignorant (A'araf 7:199)

It is an essential attribute of a Muslim state

(They are) those who if We establish them in the land, establish regular Salat and give regular charity, enjoin the right and forbid wrong; with Allah rests the end of (all) affairs. (Hajj 22:41)

It is an essential attribute of Believers

Those who turn (to Allah) in repentance, those who serve Him, and praise Him, those who wander in devotion to His cause, those who bow down and prostrate themselves in prayer, those who enjoin

FAMILY LIFE AND SOCIAL OBLIGATIONS IN ISLAM

good and forbid evil, and observe the limits set by Allah ; so proclaim the glad tidings to (these) Believers. (Taubah 9:112)

It is the basis of Muslim brotherhood

The Believers, men and women, are protectors, one of another, they enjoin what is just and forbid what is evil, they observe regular Salat, practice regular charity, and obey Allah and His Messenger ; on them will Allah pour His Mercy ; for Allah is Exalted in power, Wise. (Taubah 9:71)

The Qur'an also states that hypocrites do just the opposite of this.

The Hypocrites, men and women, (have a mutual understanding) with each other, they enjoin evil and forbid what is just. (Taubah 9:67)

Luqman's advise to his son

O my son ! Establish regular Salat, enjoin what is right, and forbid what is wrong, and bear with patient constancy whatever reaches you ; for this is firmness (of purpose) in (the conduct of) affairs. (Luqman 31:17)

Luqman was one of the wise men who lived before the advent of the Prophet in Arabia. He was well known for his wisdom and intelligence. Since the Qur'an has mentioned his name, this indicates that he was one of the Believers. This verse indicates that enjoining right and forbidding wrong was a social obligation in the teachings of other Prophets as well.

SPRITUAL OBLIGATIONS

Its universal importance

By (the token of) time (through the ages) ; Verily man is in loss ; Except such as have Eman and do the righteous deeds and (join together) in the mutual teaching of truth, and of patience and constancy.
(‘Asr 103:1-4)

The verse highlights the importance of social obligations in Islam. No matter how good a person may be in his personal attributes of *Eman* and righteousness, he can not receive Allah's blessings unless he honours his social obligations as well. It is evident from the verse that the most important social obligation in Islam is the mutual teaching of truth, that is enjoining what is right and forbidding what is wrong.

COMMANDMENTS IN AHADITH

It is one of the criteria of *Eman*

Abu Sa'eed Khudri related that Rasulullah S.A.W. said : He who from among you observes something evil should reverse it with his hand ; if he is unable to do that, he should condemn it with his tongue ; if he is unable to do even that, he should at least resent it in his heart ; this is the lowest degree of *Eman*, beyond which there is no *Eman*. (Muslim)

Abdullah ibn Mas'ud narrated that Rasulullah S.A.W. said : Every one of the Prophets raised before me had devoted disciples and companions who followed his practice and obeyed his directions. These were followed by those who said that which they did not practice, and that which they were not commanded. He who challenges them with his hand is a Believer, so also he who challenges them with his tongue, and so also he

FAMILY LIFE AND SOCIAL OBLIGATIONS IN ISLAM

who challenges them with his heart. Beyond this there is not a grain of *Eman*. (Muslim)

It is an important social obligation

Abu Sa'eed Khudri reported that Rasulullah s.a.w. directed :

Refrain from sitting in the streets. It was said to him: O Messenger of Allah! There is no other place where we can sit and discuss our matters. He then said :

In that case fulfill your obligations due to the street.

He was asked: What is due to the streets? He said: Restraining of looks, removal of obstructions, reciprocation of greetings, enjoining good and forbidding evil. (Bukhari, Muslim)

It is one of the requirements for acceptance of supplications

Hudhaifah narrated that Rasulullah s.a.w. said :

By Him in whose Hands is my life, you will continue to enjoin good and forbid evil, or else Allah will certainly afflict you with torment. Thereafter your supplications will not be heard. (Tirmidhi)

A majority of Muslims around us still observe Salat and practice other rituals of Islam. They have, however, forgotten their cardinal duty of mutual exhortation of truth and forbidding of wrong. The Hadith makes it clear that this shortcoming is the main cause of the torments and calamities that presently afflict the Muslim Ummah throughout the world.

It is one of the highest forms of Jihad

Abu Sa'eed Khudri reported that Rasulullah s.a.w. said :
The highest kind of Jihad (striving for Allah's cause) is

SPRITUAL OBLIGATIONS

proclaiming that which is just before a tyrant. (Abu Daud, Tirmidhi)

Tariq ibn Shihad related that a person asked Rasulallah s.a.w. :What is the highest form of Jihād ? He answered :

Declaring the truth in the face of a tyrant. (Nasai)

A tyrant could be a ruler or one who has some authority in a community. His actions and policies may affect the lives of a large number of people in a community. Persuading such a person to take to the right path and warning him against evil deeds will help the whole community. Hence this is considered to be one of the highest form of striving in the cause of Allah.

Consequence of neglecting this prime duty

Abu Bakar Siddique related : Oye People who read this verse :

*O you who believe ! Be heedful of your own selves ;
If you make sure of being rightly guided yourselves,
the going astray of another will not harm you
(5:106) ;*

I have heard Rasulallah s.a.w. saying :

When the people see a wrongdoer committing a wrong and do not seize his hand to restrain him, it is most likely that Allah will afflict all of them with His chastisement. (Abu Daud, Nasai, Tirmidhi).

Fearing that some people may misinterpret this verse and become complacent, Abu Bakar narrated this Hadith so that people may continue their task of inviting others to good and forbidding evil. The verse means that as long as people are virtuous and also continue their task of inviting others to good and forbidding evil, they will remain immune from any harm by the wrongdoers.

FAMILY LIFE AND SOCIAL OBLIGATIONS IN ISLAM

Abdullah ibn Mas'ud reported that Rasulullah s.a.w. said :

The first weakness crept in among the children of Israel in the manner. One of them would meet another and say to him : Fear Allah and give up what you are doing, for this is not permissible for you. Then he would meet him the next day and find no change in him, but this would not prevent him from eating, drinking and associating with him. Allah then perverted the hearts of some on account of their association with others. Then he continued : Indeed, by Allah, you must enjoin good and forbid evil and seize the hand of the wrongdoer and persuade him to act justly and establish him firmly on the right, lest Allah involve the hearts of some of you with the hearts of others and curse you as he cursed them. (Abu Daud, Tirmidhi)

It is evident from these Ahadith and the Qur'anic verses quoted earlier, that inviting people to Allah's Deen is an essential social obligation in Islam. It is quite contrary to the Western philosophy that religion is a matter of one's personal life. Islam is a Deen and does not isolate one's personal life from one's social life. It also does not segregate the material and spiritual aspects of life. Indeed, it guides man to a well balanced combinations of material and spiritual excellence in his personal as well as social life. The greatest blessing a Muslim can give to someone is not the best of home, food or drink, but to help him live a life based on the Qur'an and *Sunnah*. Physical needs and worldly comforts are just a transitory phase of our lives ; But if someone can be led to the path of Islam, this will ensure him the real peace in this life and the eternal success in the world Hereafter. Hence inviting people to Allah's Deen is the most essential social obligation of every Muslim.

SPRITUAL OBLIGATIONS

This is the task for which Allah has made us a part of the Muslim Ummah. This is the task for which the Prophet struggled for 23 years of his life. Furthermore, this is the task that differentiates the Islamic social system from that of all other religions and systems.

It may be added that inviting people to Allah's Deen consists of two parts; enjoining good and forbidding evil. If a person or a group of people, is engaged only in enjoining good but does nothing to stop evil, they are hardly meeting the requirements of the Qur'an and the *Sunnah* of our Prophet. Enjoining what is good is relatively an easy task and does not call for much struggle. On the other hand, forbidding what is wrong is a much more challenging task. It calls for severe struggle and confrontation against the forces of evil. Very often, people take the easy course and choose only the first part of obligation. They bring forth many excuses for not carrying on the other part of this obligation. It is, however, clear from the Qur'an and the *Sunanh* of our Prophet that one should not only preach what is good, but should also struggle against evil. Unless we undertake both these obligations simultaneous we cannot fulfill our cardinal social obligations in Islam.

INDEX

THE QURANIC VERSES

al- Baqarah		4 : 20	74	9 : 72	72
2 : 222	7	4 : 34	74	9 : 60	129
2 : 83	9	4 : 15	76	9 : 112	139, 140
2 : 215	12	4 : 128	77	9 : 67	140
2 : 180	13	4 : 8	96		
2 : 233	35	4 : 86	105	Ibrahim	
2 : 221	53	4 : 93	105	14 : 41	15
2 : 187	55, 74	4 : 2	127		
2 : 282	60	4 : 10	127	al-Nahl	
2 : 229	66	al- Ma'idah		16 : 58-59	35
2 : 232	67, 77	5 : 67	8	16 : 90	52, 92
2 : 229	67	5 : 5	53, 60		
2 : 236	73	5 : 92	130	Bani Israel	
2 : 228	74, 75	5 : 106	143	17 : 23	10
2 : 26-27	91			17 : 23-24	10, 11
2 : 215	94, 127	al-An'am		17 : 24	14
2 : 263	95	6 : 151	10	17 : 31	34
2 : 177	95, 96	6 : 140	34	17 : 32	53
2 : 180	96	6 : 153	34	17 : 18-19	87
2 : 220	126			17 : 26	93, 129
2 : 143	138	al-A'raf		17 : 28	95
al -Imran		7 : 33	53	17 : 34	127
3 : 185	87	7 : 189	56	17 : 46	137
3 : 110	138	7 : 157	139		
3 : 104	139	7 : 199	139	al-Kahf	
al-Nisa		al-Anfal		18 : 46	34
4 : 36	10, 92, 118, 133	8 : 41	126	Maryam	
4 : 4	54, 73			19 : 12-14	15
4 : 19	64, 68, 75	al-Taubah		19 : 30-32	15
4 : 65	64, 65	9 : 71	72, 104, 140		
4 : 32	72, 75				
4 : 1	72				

FAMILY LIFE AND SOCIAL OBLIGATIONS IN ISLAM

Ta-Ha		al-Shura		al-Taghab	
20 : 13	36	42 : 40	105	64 : 15	
				64 : 14	
al-Anbiya		al-Zukhruf		al-Talaq	
21 : 92	104	43 : 16-17	35	65 : 1	
				65 : 4	6
				65 : 2	
al-Hajj		al-Ahqaf		al-Tahree	
22 : 41	139	46 : 15-16	13, 14		
		46 : 15	14		
al-Noor		al-Fatha		66 : 6	3
24 : 32-33	52			66 : 6	
24 : 24	54	48 : 29	104		
24 : 23	76	al-Hujrat		Noah	
24 : 22	94			71 : 28	
24 : 33	133	49 : 13	103		
		49 : 10	104, 105	al-Mudass	
		49 : 11	104, 105	74 : 42-46	
al-Nama		al-Najm		al-Insan	
27 : 19	13	53 : 3-4	115	76 : 5-9	129
al-Ankabut		al-Mujadlah		al-Dhuha	
29 : 8	11			93 : 9	
29 : 45	43	al-Hashr		al-Asr	
al-Rum		59 : 7	129	103 : 1-4	
30 : 38	43	al-Mumtahinah		al-Ma'ur	
		60 : 10	73	107 : 1-2	
Luqman		al-Munafiqoon			
31 : 14	10, 13, 14				
31 : 15	12				
31 : 17	140				
al-Ahzab					
33 : 50	62, 73	63 : 9	33		
33 : 35	72				
33 : 21	83				